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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

[*A Lecture delivered in Japan*].

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When I was about to start for my tour in China and Japan, there was an enthusiatic meeting in Calcutta, where my countrymen came together to express their joy at my taking this journey to the great Eastern countries. I felt with a sense of delight that the consciousness of kinship was waxing stronger among our people and that its growth might lead to a great future for Asia.

My friends who came to wish me happy times on these shores, asked me also to convey to your country their feelings of love and respect for you. They also requested me to ask you to rise above circumstances, favourable or unfavourable, and to prove the dignity of Eastern mind. They are all waiting to see a great Renaissance in Asia through Japan, where life is at its floodtide, and they wish she would wake up to the great responsibility she has, not only to her own people, but to the great continent to which she belongs.

At the same time, they wanted me to offer to your people their heartfelt sympathy for the disaster which has so suddenly overtaken your country. I am sure that the calamities over which you have no hand came to prove your manhood, and are in themselves an opportunity. Disasters only become absolutely disastrous when we know not how to deal with them.

Now that I have come to Japan, I realise with what courage you have accepted your tribulation. I see no sign of despair in your faces; I see that you have within yourselves that indomitable

resourcefulness which will help you to make good the loss. I do not mean that they will merely make your position stronger even than before; but the fact that you are able to face misfortune of such an overwhelming nature in the right spirit, will gain for you greater prestige among other nations, and give you a firmer confidence in your own power.

All great civilisations are built upon numberless ruins,—the toppled down towers of victory and wealth. It is only human beings in this world of life who have found their greatness through the desperate urgings of unfavourable circumstances. Humanity has never been pampered, petted and spoilt by Nature, but rather respected by being given constant opportunity to overcome the obstacles of failures and losses. I believe that what has now happened to you, and has brought your gathered resources of years to the dust in a moment, will inspire you to make a better beginning for a more vigorous experiment. You will realise that the people's life, like a waterfall, finds its full force of movement through courageous leaps from peak to peak of new trials.

This earthquake has only been the cause of physical upset for you, but unfortunately, closely following this, you have also received lately a rude moral shock in your national relations with another people, and this has deeply hurt your people, even more than the former which was only physical, because it has come with deliberate purpose from human hands. And yet what I expect to see among your people at this time of crisis is the same dignity of calm and patient fortitude.

You are on your trial to-day. The eyes of all nations are upon you in this calamity. Great tribulations in our history should never fail to give us the occasion to bring out the best resources of our life, so as not only to reveal them to the outer world, but—and this is more valuable—to reveal them to ourselves. If to-day you can discover some hidden source of magnanimity with which to face the insult and injury, if you can keep the majesty of your mind unimpaired, then you will be happy, and future generations will be thankful to you.

You have discovered one thing, that this earthquake, though but physical, and therefore causing you only material loss, has yet a great similarity to the disturbance of your relations with a

western country; for, the latter is also external, having in it no acknowledgement of moral law. Any relationship which had a moral value, would have been stronger than before at this time of suffering. But your relationship, as it was, was precarious. Any little event would have proved its hollowness. This was inevitable because it was not based upon the comradeship of human hearts. It had for its basis a sense of mere expediency, that lacked the frankness of youth and had the calculating spirit of senility. It was a treacherously shifting base upon which you could never have built your best hopes.

It is unfortunate that such disillusionment always gives rise to our baser passions. We feel angry and vengeful and eager to retaliate. Only then it becomes a complete defeat. I know if this insult had been offered by you to any western country, there would have been furious outbreaks of violence, of Ku Klux Klanism, of atrocious lynching against your people, and even its scientists and scholars would have had no shame in repudiating the claims of science and scholarship in your country. But is it right that you should copy that? Is it right that you, along with your political defeat, should accept moral defeat? I hope that your people, through your spiritual generosity, through your true pride of civilisation and through that sense of hospitality, which has been your birthright for centuries, will exercise your mind that has been trained and gifted with a wonderful self-control.

I should deplore very deeply the appearance of any sign of decay in these great traits of character that you possess. This is the time when you can bring out of your store all the wealth of moral heroism that you have inherited from your forefathers. This is the time to put to shame those others who have treated you in this unchivalrous manner, showing that their profession of friendship was all the while waiting for your weak moment, shamelessly to contradict itself. I do not think that any symptom of political hysteria on your part, is at all seemly at this time, or in accordance with your national tradition.

If we find you indulging just now in vulgar boisterousness, we shall know that it is weakness, which you have borrowed through those importers of moral drugs from abroad. We have been schooled in the West, where they have become hypnotised

by the sight of open and public expressions of vengefulness, the modern version of the naked war-dance of the savage. I hope that you will be saved from this. Real suicide it would be, if you were to forget your own true character, and the fact that there is a kind of death far worse than physical death itself.

In the East, we have had the courage to have faith even in impossible ideals. You all know that it was a prophet of the East who could say : "Love your enemies". You know too of another prophet of the East who could say : "Conquer anger by non-anger and evil by goodness." There are those in the West, who have accepted these teachings in their churches and yet who feel extremely nervous when they are reminded of them, when they find that such teaching is commercially unprofitable and politically inconvenient. Some of our friends here, who have studied Indian History, will tell you how these ideals have been pursued and believed in, and how men went to extreme lengths of non-killing, of non-violence, and of non-anger.

You have perhaps also learnt from the newspapers how a prophet has arisen in India, who has likewise proclaimed that you have to conquer violence by non-violence. He speaks like a prophet of the East and insists that what has been translated into the Bible of the West must not only be pursued in the personal lives of individuals but must be given the best possible expression in our national lives.

Perhaps most of you will not accept this teaching,—you will not be able to apply it to your national life. I understand your misgivings and sympathise with you in your want of faith. But let us discuss this point.

There was a time when our lives were simpler, when the spirit of the people was hospitable. This spirit has been overcome by the spirit of the Nation, with its intense consciousness of self-interest concentrated in political organisation. Such an unlimited cultivation of over-consciousness of self by the whole people, must inevitably produce its harvest of suspicion, hatred and inhospitable exclusiveness. And therefore if you have been rudely treated by a nation, and abruptly hustled out whenever it has been safe for it to disclose its moral crudity, there is no cause for surprise. It is of no use to be angry either against the earth-

quake, or against such eruptions of moral catastrophe, which are inevitable when this phenomenon that we term the Nation is rampant.

To be just and fair, you have to acknowledge that you also have been unjust and grasping where your nation has had a safe opportunity to manifest its evil aspect. I have a deep love and respect for you as a people, but when as a nation you have your dealings with other nations you also can be deceptive, cruel and efficient in handling those methods in which the western nations show such mastery. You must not plume yourselves that when you are suffering from small-pox, your skin and temperature behave better than those of other people who have the same malady.

Let us consider how this demoniacal power of the Nation has arisen. The nature of the people depends for its manifestation upon its creative personality. It has religion, arts, literature, traditions of social responsibility and co-operation. Its wealth to maintain itself and power of defence are secondary; they are not the ultimate ends for the people. But the Nation manifests itself in its property. The people represent life, the nation materials; when they are in harmony, that is to say, when material possessions keep to their own limits and the creative life is unhampered in its spontaneous activity, then civilisation is hospitable and generous. This being the case in the olden times it was possible for India to find her home in the heart of China and Japan, and your administrators did not busy themselves to find out if some groups of idealists, freed from barriers of passport offices, were finding access to the heart of your country, instead of into its gaols with police spies at their heels.

But when material possessions become too vast for a people, or when in competition with others the desire for material wealth rouses its ambition, then all its time and mind are occupied with very little else. The man who is "millionaire" is dragged by the very weight of his millions to the path of the multitude of millions. Then he has no time for culture, or for the poetry of life; he strictly barricades himself against visitors, whom he cannot but suspect to be self-seekers, being selfish in his own out-look upon life. In other words he becomes professional, and the human in him is banished into the shade.

Since nature's storehouse of power and wealth has been opened by the help of science, some people who know how to take advantage of it have suddenly grown enormously rich and others are incited to follow their example. The people, who were human, who were creative and social in their self-expression, have become professional, enormously self-centred and anti-social in their tendency of mind. Material wealth and power, with their very bulk, have occupied the greater part of the space, time and mind, of the people, necessitating a tremendous expense of thought and resources for ensuring its safety.

Material possessions create the worst divisions in human society when they are disproportionately big and naturally unmindful of moral responsibility. Therefore the Nation, the presiding genius of the material department of the people, can not but be hard and exclusive. And in the modern age this department has become the most proudly domineering of all other manifestations of human society. It has made the craving for money universal and has given the name of Progress to the raising of the material standard of living.

We all know how those who are immoderately rich suffer from a sense of class-distinction; how money, which is a dead thing, acts as an impenetrable wall around their self-imprisonment. Within this dungeon of illusion, they are proud of their segregation. This process is going on not only with individuals, but with the prosperous nations. And it is just these prosperous nations which become most suspicious of idealism, which barricade their doors with spies, police and prohibitions in order to safeguard their citadel of wealth, where the human spirit languishes and where there is no touch of life.

Such nations are doomed and they carry the curse of God in their money bags. They will die in the very enclosures which they have built for themselves,—enclosures of wealth, of high walls of national distinction impenetrable for others. Yet these are the people who once professed faith in a man, and even accepted him to be their God; who said it was easier for a camel to pass through the needle's eye than for the rich to find access to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven is here on this earth. It is there,

where we realise our best relations with our fellow-beings where there is no mutual suspicion and misunderstanding. There is the Kingdom of Heaven, in the spirit of comradeship and love. Christ was right when he said that the path to such a Kingdom is closed for him who thinks more of his money than of his soul, more of his soul, more of his personal right than of his human responsibility. Now that the whole human world has surrendered itself to the lure of money and power, the severance of human relationship is everywhere becoming evident and the fight between classes is spreading wide.

If you must have peace, you will have to fight the spirit of this demon, the Nation. You may think it hopeless, but do you not realise that its first appearance was not so long ago, not more than two centuries; that it has not the sign of immortality upon it, that already it is tottering towards its downfall? You must know that if we cling to this sinking ship, we also shall be drowned.

Let me appeal to your imagination. If we could go back into the distant past, we would know of facts that are not in histories. We would know that groups of men grew into great peoples through overcoming a feeling of distrust and cultivating sympathy for each other. It was not at all easy; for our passions are individualistic, our selfishness immensely strong. And yet the impossible has been attained in some societies. A system of discipline has been established, the sentiments of sympathy cultivated and the ferocious savage has been tamed on a wholesale scale. We must also know that those who went on indulging in their sefish isolation, perished.

Suppose that the idealists had been there in those days and that they had had the courage to speak to those who still believed in robbery and muscular brutality and to warn them that they would never form great nations, do you they think that they would have been listened to? They would promptly have been eaten up!

In the early history of life in this world, with its display of stupendous bodily bulk and strength, when puny man first appeared on this earth, could his final victory have been predicted by the logic of appearances? In the same manner, it is apparent-

ly unbelievable to-day that only those who can overcome the egoistic sense of nationalism, who can develop the understanding of sympathy that pierces through barriers of race differences, who have the enduring strength of meekness, will inherit the earth; and not those who are imagined to be born rulers of men.

Often have my western friends almost sneeringly said to me that we in the East have no faith in Democracy, and thereupon they have asserted the superiority of their own mind over ours. Not being combative, I did not want to argue the matter and contradict them in their deep-rooted illusion. I know that in our part of the world we have some people who, as being of noble descent, are considered aristocrats, and enjoy special rights. My western friends believe that they have no such anomalies in their part of the world.

Be that as it may, one thing they must admit, that because our aristocracy is restricted to a narrow circle, the rest of the people have the true democratic spirit, which is the spirit of the community. About one thing there can be no difference of opinion, that we never had an aristocracy of the whole people, like this monstrous aristocracy so proud of its European blood, which has no pity for others who are darker in colour, for those Asiatics and African who can be exploited with impunity, as the common people used to be exploited in France before the revolution broke out.

These monster aristocrats consider us to be plebeian, because we are of another continent. While loudly protesting their democracy, they extort false evidence from a make-believe science to prove their race superiority and their right to inherit the earth. These aristocrats of monstrous girth and open jaws are out to feast upon the life blood of peoples whom they have dubbed ignoble, who are expected to feel grateful for providing comfort to the Nordic race with their own extinction. They assert their race aristocracy, not merely through their home-made science, but through the coercion of darker continents to slavery by the shattering argument of bombs. To day, they are almost openly ready to drop their pretensions to moral culture; but nevertheless they cling to their two illusions, the one of the Nordic race, and the other of Democracy.

We, who do not profess democracy, acknowledge our human obligations and have faith in our code of honour. But are you also going to allow yourselves to be tempted by the contagion of this belief in your own hungry right of inborn superiority, bearing the false name of democracy? Leave the unreality of these professions; hold up to us something which is your very own and not mere imitation. Do you not see how this malady of imitation is rapidly spreading from shore to shore, from nation to nation? It has the same monotony of features, in its offices, barracks, dress and manners, its attitude of mind. Every people in this world is vying with its neighbour to copy it, because being non-living it is easy to copy indefinitely. It is a mask that can be precisely similar in its multiplication, not a face which has spontaneous variety of self-expression.

But the mask can easily smother the living individuality of the face. That is what is happening everywhere in the world, the monotony of the nation killing the individuality of the people. The stone pavement, which can be made in the same stereotyped plan everywhere, deprives the soil of its unique personality of flowers and harvest. Through this deadening influence, even your arts and crafts, all the delicate idioms of expression in your life and surroundings, are fast losing their own living character and stiffening into the standardised convention made in a foreign world. The Nation makes this mould, which may be useful; but we cannot afford to pay its cost with the inspiration of creative life, which is inherent in living peoples.

It is the people in the western countries, that have produced its literature, its art, its music and dance; it is the spirit of the people that spoke through the voice of the great dramatists and artists of Greece, through the voice of Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe; it is the soul of your people, which reigns in your homes, giving them a profound quiet of beauty, in the dignified self-control of your behaviour, in the combination of usefulness and grace in all things that you produce, in your inimitable paintings and dramatic performances.

But what are these products of the Nation,—the machinery of destruction and profit-making, the double dealings of diplomacy, —in the face of which moral obligation lies defeated and the spirit

of human brotherhood destroyed? You have been tempted, or perhaps almost compelled, to accept them; and we in India are envying you, ready for ourselves to accept as much of them as comes our way. The cruelty and meanness of lies and exaggeration and the greed of self-seeking are creeping up over that soil on which were born those great sages who preached *maitri* and self-emancipation.

Whenever the spirit of the Nation has come, it has destroyed sympathy and beauty, and driven out the generous obligations of human relationship from the hearts of men. It has spread the ugliness of its cities and its markets into the minds and enthroned the demon of deformity on the hearts of men. Though to-day it dominates the spirit of man everywhere in the world, it will die like the worm which dies in the heart of the fruit that it has devoured. It will die,—but unfortunately it may meanwhile destroy things of unrivalled worth, the products of centuries of self-control and spiritual training.

I have come to warn you in Japan, the country where I wrote my first lectures against Nationalism at a time when people laughed my ideas to scorn. They thought that I did not know the meaning of the word and accused me of having confused the word Nation with State. But I stuck to my conviction and now after the war, do you not hear everywhere the denunciation of this spirit of the nation, this collective egoism of the people, which is universally hardening their hearts?

I have come once again to remind you. I hope to be able to meet individuals in this country, who have the courage of faith needed to bring about a great future. Let Japan find her own true mind, which will not merely accept lessons from others, but will create a world of her own, which will be generous of its gifts to all humanity. Make all other peoples of Asia proud in their acknowledgement of your greatness, which is not based upon the enslavement of victims, upon the accumulation of material wealth exclusively for your own enjoyment,—wealth which is not accepted by man for all time and is rejected by God.

THE BODY OF HUMANITY

By C. F. Andrews.

I.

Ever since I was able to think seriously, it has appeared to me self-evident, that if the theory of physical evolution is true, and human life in this planet is the crown of creation, then it is impossible that the religious instinct in man can be a disorderly and chaotic factor in human life,—a mere rivalry of warring creeds. There must be an organic unity between those different creeds, which have persisted in human development,—a relation between them that is intimately spiritual. We can no longer think of each creed as a special creation. The genealogical tree of religion in man's long history has many branches, and these branches issue from a parent stem; they are not individual and distinct and cut off from one another, as we used to think of them in our pre-Darwinian days.

Such thoughts have been with me all through my conscious life of seeking after truth. The difficulty has been, to trace out the main directions in which the different branches of religion have grown, and also to relate them to the parent stem. I have come to one personal conclusion, which I have slowly made my own. Just as, amid the many names of those who dealt with the physical evolution of mankind, the name of Darwin stands first as a pioneer and discoverer, so in the realm of religious evolution, Raja Ram Mohan Roy's name will stand out greatest and highest of all.

What I am trying to describe in this article as a result of my own conscious experience in thought, owes its outline at least to the extraordinary stimulus which I received from my first reading of the English works of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. I would wish to acknowledge this, as a debt which is deeply due, before I go on. In what follows I have ventured to use some material from an unfinished essay, which I contributed to the Modern

Review more than ten years ago. I have, however, considerably revised some of my previous conclusions.

When we try, with all the accumulated knowledge of mankind which the last century has given us, to picture the human race past and present, we find that the two longest groups of human civilisation and culture spring ultimately from two great underlying religious movements in the East and West.

The former of these two movements had its centre in Northern India and passed thence to almost every part of Asia, except its Western corner, unifying for over two thousand years the further East. It goes by the name of Hinduism in India, and of Buddhism in other lands.

The second, which is called Christianity, had its original home in the Western corner of Asia, among a Semitic people, and therefrom passed over the whole of Europe and America unifying the West.

Between these two great areas of culture, stretches a great land barrier, as it were, which was occupied later in the day by a third supreme movement of religion, called Islam, dividing for the most part by its presence the two cultures, to the East and West of it, about which I have already spoken. The watersheds of Indian religion have on the whole been eastward. The watersheds of Christianity have been persistently westward. From time to time, the land barrier of Western Asia has been crossed; but more frequently, Islam itself has been modified and moulded by Christianity on its Western borders and by Hinduism on its Eastern frontier, and has coloured in turn with its own distinctive hue both these religions.

It might be of speculative interest to consider, what would have happened if Indian Buddhism had wholly pierced the land barrier westward before it was occupied by Islam; or if St. Paul's vast spiritual genius and personality had fully pierced it eastward. But for practical purposes such speculations are of little value. The course of human history has flowed steadily in other directions; and, if the theory of religious evolution is true, there must be some design and purpose in all such demarcations.

In making these wide generalisations, I have omitted two hitherto unsolved historical factors. The former is the important

question how far the Hindu-Buddhist impulse did actually penetrate the West before the birth of Christ. The second is the problem of Nestorian Chrisianity. New evidence is coming to light, every day, that this Eastern presentation of the Christian Faith may have affected Mahayana Buddhism and have left much fertilising silt behind, as it flooded forward as far as China in the Seventh and Eighth centuries after Christ. But neither of these two questions affects the actual grouping of religions, which we find in the world to-day.

A fourth group, comprising the animistic tribes of Africa, Polynesia, South America, and certain parts of Asia, need not delay us. For there is every sign, that the whole area of the world's population will rapidly be absorbed into one or other of the religions already mentioned. In Africa, for instance, Islam is likely to go on expanding from the North towards the Centre; while Christianity is spreading with equal rapidity from the South and around the Central Lakes. There would appear to be no likelihood, at this later stage of history, of the birth of a new religion in these regions of undeveloped humanity.

II.

When we examine the two larger groups of mankind,—leaving aside for the moment the Islamic area,—we find that there is one striking resemblance in their primitive history. Secular civilisation of a material type, has been penetrated at last by religion owing to the birth of a supremely spiritual personality. With regard to India, we are slowly coming to understand how far advanced in art and wealth and commerce the ancient Dravidian Civilisation actually was, before the Aryan invasion took place. The Aryans did not find merely savage peoples to conquer. There was a background of culture already there. But the religious work of the Aryans was so creative and productive,that Dravidian India was not only converted, it became in turn singularly rich in religious thought and gave the true direction of each new advance of Hinduism during the early Middle Ages. Thus India has kept permanently religions.

Another unsolved problem of history, which I can only show in passing, is to find out how far the Dravidian secular system

contained in itself the seeds of religion and thus helped originally to make the Aryan development progressive. Certain speculations have recently swung the pendulum of our historical imagination that way, bidding us revise our facts concerning the debt of the Dravidians to the Aryan invaders.

In China, the penetration of the original secular civilisation by the Aryan religion was never so complete as in India itself. The Confucian ethics had already so deeply impressed Chinese life as a whole, that the Buddhist movement from India became almost absorbed into this strong ethical culture. Nevertheless Okakura's picture of a Buddha land, which reached from Bactria to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, is in the main a true one. The religious spirit of India, transplanted to China, Japan and the Malay Peninsula, has left its deep mark upon all these countries. It has produced many of those same qualities, in the peoples of the Far East, that we find in India itself, and has given to the whole group of Eastern peoples an unmistakable spiritual distinction.

The power of this religious atmosphere to transform character may be measured from the fact, that all the barbarian invasions of fierce and savage races into India and China have never been able to subdue this inner spirit of religious peace and calm or to force back these countries into barbarism. If there is a spiritual atmosphere of the East, peculiarly its own, it is due principally to the effect of this unifying Aryan religion, which radiated from India.

Turning to the West, we find the same permeation of secular civilisation by creative religion. Here, in the West, the Aryan invaders found a civilisation, already in possession, even more highly developed than that of the Dravidians in India. With its home originally in Egypt, and its centre, later on, in Crete, it mingled with the other civilisations of the world in Mesopotamia and Phoenicia, and reproduced their art and luxury. But it seems to have lacked that spiritual idealism, which might have served to make it a beacon light for humanity.

That light was first kindled in Europe by the intermingling of the young Aryan invaders with the older inhabitants. This cross fertilisation issued in the intellectual glory of Greece. But

it was from a Semetic source,—in the tiny corner of Western Asia called Judea,—that came, along with a supreme spiritual personality, the genial religious impulse which we call Christianity.

Few problems have been more difficult to solve than the origins of this religion. That these were not solely Semetic, appears now to be quite certain. But two questions remain unsolved : (*i*) How far the Hundu-Buddhist influences had reached Palestine, in such a way as to give seed thoughts to the new religious cult; (*ii*) How far the Greek mind had penetrated the Christian religious development from its very first inception. What is ascertained is this, that a spiritual force of immense potency had suddenly appeared in the history of the human race, which was only comparable with the Buddhist impulse from India. Those who have read through H. G. Well's 'Outline of History' are aware, how these two creative Epochs, the Christian and the Buddhist, are the two pivots on which the whole history of the human race turns.

In the subsequent centuries of the West, the Christian light has more than once been nearly extinguished altogether. From the eighth to the twelfth centuries in Europe, barbarism had reigned almost supreme. But during the Middle Ages, a revival of pure religion passed over the whole of the West. A second revival came with the Reformation; then the Modern Age began. Meanwhile Christianity itself had crossed the Atlantic and powerfully affected the growth of the young civilisation that had sprung up in North America. The Quakers and the Puritans of Pennsylvania and New England set the type.

When we try to review this process in order to consider the spiritual atmosphere produced in the West, we must allow for certain factors, as in the case of China, which stand apart from religion altogether and may be traced to purely secular causes. The chief of these, perhaps, is that strong aggressive energy which has been derived partly from the old Roman tradition and partly from Teutonic sources. Christianity has used this and modified it, but has never completely assimilated and transformed it, or overcome its harshness, except in individuals.

III.

With the ground work thus mapped out, we may now go on to consider how far the corporate ideal of humanity has been advanced and how far it has been retarded.

Turning first to India and China, which comprise nearly half the human race, we find in certain directions a very strong cohesive tendency at work. It is a strange historical blindness which fails to see the inner unity of the Indian peoples,—a unity all the more striking because of the multiplicity of races and languages, of local and tribal customs.

It is a unity almost entirely dependent on a spiritual atmosphere, hard to define but omnipresent. A bewildering variety of religious emotions, age after age, has gone to produce it: the continuous tradition of the Brahmin priesthood has influenced it, for good and ill alike. But deeper than this, there seems to be something equivalent to a religious attachment to the very soil itself; a sense of the GENIUS LOCI, on a transcendant scale; a devotion which makes every mountain and river sacred, and unites with this sanctity the very animals as integral with mankind. This religious attachment is bound up with the thought of God as immanent in the universe and in man. It is not in any way the product of the schools, but closely akin to Nature, and found most strongly developed in those who are nearest to Nature,—the villagers, the peasants.

This sense of unity, this religious spirit, which finds God's immanence everywhere, has gradually produced its own atmosphere and made the land of India like no other region on Earth. Alien races have entered India, and fallen under its spell. Alien religions have come in, and felt a subtle change pass over them. India has always been and always must be essentially a country of religion, because religion is in the very air that India breathes.

When the social effect of this remarkable religious development is looked for, the first impression is one of disappointment. For the immense stratification of society caused by the caste system, with the 'untouchable' problem behind it, has rendered Hindu life in certain respects highly artificial, and, in the cult

of untouchability, inhuman. The self-contained village system next attracts attention, owing to its persistence through all the changes of history; but while it has a simplicity and beauty of its own, which it would be vandalism to destroy, yet in its present form it has shown singularly little adaptibility, or progressive assimilation.

It is when we come to the inner circle of the family, that we reach the true secret of India's greatness and find the highest mark of spiritual influence. This lies in the ideal of the true life, so intimately bound up at every point with religion, and the reverence of man for womanhood as the 'mother', with its counterpart of wifely devotion, giving the profoundest unity of all. Marriage, in India, has become a sacrament of renunciation. The womanhood of India, more than anything else, has kept this sacramental view of life whole and undefiled. By the Hindu woman's utter and absolute self-devotion, going even to the extravagant lengths of *Sati,* she has maintained religious idealism secure, and set forth an infinite and unbounded sacrifice before the eyes of men. Thus man, in his turn, has been drawn away from the world to the religious life, and has found in his old age no satisfaction except in the Eternal.

In China, the close cohesion of the population has been reached by a different process; yet in the family life is to be found, even as in India, the secret of its permanence and stability,—the true basis of a lasting civilisation, that has somehow escaped the poison germs of senile decay. In comparison with the Indian conception, we note in China this new and striking fact, that the centre of devotion, and of the same type of extravagant sacrifice, lies not so much in the wife, as in the children, who are ready to yield life itself on behalf of the parents. This fact has made the idealism of China more ethical, sober and practical, and less mystically religious than that of India.

The filial love of China is based on noble ethical law and custom, finding a response in the human heart. But the love of wife and mother in India had its origin in religion, and has therefore maintained throughout its essentially mystical and sacramental basis. Thus the love of the son and the daughter for the parents in China has not brought with it quite the same sense

of the Infinite which Indian religion has always possessed. Yet there can be no question, that the ancestor worship of the Chinese, and the filial devotion connected with it, have a close relation to India, and their growth through many centuries has made a worthy contribution to the Body of Humanity.

When we turn away from India and China to the West, we find a strongly different picture. At first sight, here again, the outward effects of Christianity,—with its high spiritual teaching unattained and unattainable,—are disappointing. There has been, on one side, the immoderate haste to increase material riches at the expense of others, which has led to the exploitation of alien races and the growth of an inhuman colour prejudice; while, on the other side, there has grown up a complicated system of aggressive and pugnacious national units, which, like the caste system in India, have outgrown their proper use and become a menace to mankind.

But along with this negative and destructive side, there has also been a positive contribution of good, which represents the great constructive achievement of Europe. This finds its centre most truly in the ideal of individual freedom and personality, often grossly caricatured and misrepresented, but still our ever abiding and increasing possession which the Body of Humanity may claim for its own.

This ideal of freedom may have already existed in Europe in pre-Christian times. It underlies, in a certain measure, both Greek and Roman History; and it gained fresh strength from the Teutonic races. But Lord Acton has shown, in his famous lectures entitled 'The History of Freedom', how Christianity imparted to the ideal of freedom its own peculiar spiritual power and made it current coin for mankind as a whole to use.

A further phase of the same ideal of freedom and personality is represented by the mingling of the spiritual hope in the future of mankind with the experimental knowledge of modern science. Science received at last in Europe, after many struggles and persecutions, the mental background of aspiration which it needed in order to make its great advance. The development of practical philanthropy has gone forward hand in hand with it.

This united advance has cleared away already many of the foul diseases which were festering in the Body of Humanity. It has made directly for soundness and sanity and health. It has led, in modern times, to the emancipation of the slave, the mitigation of human suffering, together with the reduction of cruelty both towards man and beast. What was foreshadowed in early Buddhist times, more than twenty centuries ago, and practised all over the East, has now been taken up into a world-wide religious movement of humanitarian sympathy coextensive with all the races of living creatures both animal and human.

The New World of North America was early freed, by fortunate circumstances, from the aggressive nationalisms of Europe, with their petty local frontiers and armed customs barriers bristling like prickly hedges, dividing mankind into fenced compartments. The disruptive tendencies of the Old World have been overcome in a considerable measure in the New; and there has been a great cohesive tendency binding the different states and provinces together. Furthermore, a vast immigrant population from the poorest classes of Europe—Poles, Italians, Russians, Irish,—has been absorbed and assimilated.

On the other hand, the Negro problems in North America, and other allied 'colour' questions, still remain unsolved. The signs are ominious and full of portent for the future. The recent ruthless Asiatic Exclusion Law has dealt a serious wound at the Body of Humanity, which will be extremely hard to heal.

Yet in spite of these portentous and alarming features, there is a youthful vigour and a freedom from past impediments about the peoples of the New World, which may enable them both to make their peace betimes with Asia, and also overcome the separatist evils which have so often defeated Europe and Asia alike. The younger member of the human family has not yet, however, the right to take the lead. That right, if prematurely given, might only spell disaster to mankind.

In the second part of this Essay, I shall discuss what contribution the Islamic Civilisation is likely to make to the Body of Humanity, and also examine the possibilities of the immediate future, when intimate intercourse becomes still further developed among the peoples of mankind.

WHEN ALL MY DOORS ARE OPEN.

By RABINDRANATH.

Once when we were both together, Spring came to our cottage,
"Let me in," he cried.
He had brought for us the whispered secrets of his gladness,
Lyrics of new leaves.
I was busy with my fancies, you sat at your spinning,
He went back unheeded.
Suddenly we started when we saw his parting shadow
And his remnant roses.

Now, you are away, beloved, Spring comes to our cottage,
"Let me in," he cries.
He has brought for me the fitful shiver of the shadows,
Doves' despondent cooings.
I sit idle at the window, and a phantom spinning
Spins to me sad dreams,
Now that Spring has for his gift the gift of secret sorrow
All my doors are open.

A JAPANESE VIEW OF MODERN ART

By Okakura Kakuzo.

This essay is a confession—hence an appeal; an appeal, therefore a protest. And protests are apt to be wearisome. It concerns itself chiefly with the problems of modern art as seen from a Japanese point of view. Remember, however, that my criticisms are not dictated by any want of respect for Western art, compelling as it does, in all its phases, the unconscious homage of wonder, if not always of admiration. Our reverential attitude toward any true expressions of art can be traced to our time-honoured axiom, that a picture should be approached as one would enter the presence of a great prince. We have been taught to prostrate ourselves even to a vase of flowers before examining the beauty of its arrangement.

In the first place, I wish to distinguish between the problems which concern the individual painter and those which concern society. In our Eastern conception of art, questions of technique belong to the painter himself. The public has no right to determine what it shall be, in the present or in the future. The individuality of the artistic effort forbids that an outsider should meddle in its methods. The painter himself is but half cognizant of the secret which makes him a master, for each new idea imposes its own modes and laws. The moment when he formulates his secrets is the moment when he enters on his old age and death.

For beauty is the joy of the eternal youthfulness of the creative mind. And it is the sharing the gladness of the artist in his discovery of a re-awakened life in the universe that constitutes the love of art to us. One of our monk-painters of the Ashikaga period in the fourteenth century claims that art is as the *samadhi* of the playfulness of the human soul. Samadhi, as you know, is the term for supreme realization in Indian speech. Indeed, it is the magnificent innocence of the playful genius which is too selfish to be exclusive, that makes all great Art so unapproachable and so inviting to all.

The common weakness of humanity is to offer advice when it is not asked. Society has been ever ready to invade the sanctuary of Art. Patronage, with its accustomed superciliousness, has often imposed its authority on a realm which gold could not reach. Public criticism. with the best intentions in the world, has made itself only ridiculous by trying to interfere in questions where the painter must be the sole judge. Why enchain the vital spirit of Art? It is evanescent and always alive, and is godlike in its transformations. Was it not a Greek who said that he defined certain limits in Art by what he had done? The Napoleonic geniuses of the brush are constantly winning victories, mindless of the dogmatic strategy of the academicians. The foremost critic of modern England has been ironically censured for his undue depreciation of Whistler, as one who was to be remembered by what he failed to understand. The fate of æsthetic discussions is, to hand on the Achillean heels of Art, and therein to find the vulnerable point of attack. We can Ruskinize only on the past.

If I may stretch a point, the masters themselves may be said to be responsible for allowing society to frustrate the spontaneous play of later artists. Their personality has been so great as to leave a lasting impression on the canons of beauty, and any deviation from the accepted notions is certain to be regarded with suspicion. Society has been taken into the confidence of Art, and, like all confidences, it has been either too little or too much. The world has become disrespectful toward Art on account of the proffered familiarity. It feels at liberty to dictate where it ought to worship, to criticize where it ought to comprehend. It is not that the public should not talk, but that it should know better. It is not that society should not be amused, but that it should enjoy more. We are sorry to realize how much of real æsthetic sympathy is lost in the jargon of studio-talks.

The very individuality of Art, which makes its problem so subjective to the artist, at the same time makes it defy classification in time. It is a matter of doubt whether we can speak of the "modern problems" in painting as such, with any degree of accuracy or with profit. The problem which confronts the painter to-day has been always with him, since the days he first

traced the mastodon on bone fragments, in the primeval dens of the cave-lions.

In this age of classification we often forget that the eternal flow of life joins us with our predecessors. Classification is, after all, a convenience to arrange our thoughts, and, like all objects of convenience, becomes in the end troublesome. The modern scientific mind is apt to consider itself to have conquered matter by simply labelling it. But definitions are limitations, and thus barriers to our insight. A seventeenth-century Japenese poet has written that we feel the coldness of things on our lips, like a blast of autumn, whenever we begin to speak. Lao-tsze, in his supreme adoration of the Unspeakable, has pointed out that the reality of a house is not in the roof or the walls, but in the spaces which they create. So the reality of painting consists in its innate beauty, not in the names of the schools or periods in which we love to arrange it on the shelves of our historical consciousness.

It has been said that Romanticism is the distinctive characteristic of modern art. But which of the so-called classic masters has not been romantic? If the term means individualism, the expression of the self instead of impersonal ideals, it must be the common property, nay, the very essence of all creative efforts. If the term means the emotional side of the art-impulse in contradistinction to the intellectual, or the sensuous, which respectively represent the classic or the realistic, it is again a name for Art itself, because Art is emotion. A painting is the whole man, with his infinite susceptibilities to the thoughts of other men and the nature around him. It is his essay on the world, whether it be a protest or an acquiescence. Delacroix has been considered the acme of modern Romanticism. But do we not see in him the all-roundness of a great artistic mind? He is an artist. He is a Delacroix.

Again, people are wont to claim that Realism is the insignia of modern painting. There is no realism in Art in the strict sense of the word, for Art is a suggestion through Nature, not a presentation of Nature itself. We may notice that a vast amount of conventionality exists even in the French Impressionists who are said to have uttered the last word of Realism. Their best productions command respect, not on account of their power of

painting sunlight, but in the value of the new poetry they are enabled to express through their outdoor technique. Am I correctly informed that it was found in Titian? Certainly in Michel-angelo!

Although the development of painting in different countries has created different methods of approaching nature, the original relation to it has never been broken. For nature is a part of Art as the body is a part of the soul. A Sung writer has called attention to the interrelation by the remark that one admires a landscape for being like a picture, and a picture because it is like a real landscape. Art is no less an interpretation of nature than nature is a commentary on Art. The types of physical beauty in man or woman, which have been the source of inspiration to great masters, are in their turn determined by the ideal which they set for the succeeding generations. The waves have become Korin to us, as shadows have grown to be Rembrandt to you.

I do not know if I have made my meaning clear. I have been trying to say that the problems of the painter are individual and subjective, that the method of expressing his personality lies entirely with each artist and forbids any interference from the outside. I hope that I have conveyed to you the idea that the questions which we may discuss profitably regarding painting are not, whether it shall be more idealistic or less realistic, whether the artist should create in this scheme of colour, or that tone of light. These belong to the painter exclusively, and he is well able to take care of himself.

Then what is the objective side of the question? What are the modern problems of painting which society can fitly discuss at all? I reply that it is the relation of painting to Society itself. Society regulates the conditions under which Art is produced. If it cannot claim the artist, it can claim the man. If it cannot dictate his technique, it can furnish his theme, and to a certain extent his ideals. It is in the secret understanding between the performer and the audience that both delight. It is the humanity that reverberates alike through the chord of Art and the hearts of the people. The more human the call, the more universal and deeper the response.

Nothing touches us more than the weary lines on a great painter's face, for they are the traces, not of his contact with his art, but with the world. One is a joy and a solace, the other is an eternal torment. The antagonism between the two lies in the laws of their existence. Art is the sphere of freedom, Society that of conventions. The vulgar ever resent the ideal, Society is somehow always afraid of the living artist. It begins to offer applause when his ears are deaf,—flowers when he is safely laid in his grave. The success and popularity of a living painter in many cases are signs of lowness of spiritual level. For the higher the artistic mind soars, the greater becomes the possibility of local or contemporary miscomprehension. Even in the perfection of Raphael, or in the princely ease of Rubens, we are tempted to miss the sublimity of the tormented soul of Michel-angelo.

Society has not only been inimical to individual masters, but has at times indulged in the wholesale destruction of schools. Eastern Art had also its ample measure of such catastrophes. To give an example : the conquest of China by the Mongols in the thirteenth century brought about a sudden downfall of Celestial Art from which it has never since been able to recover.

As you are doubtless aware, the time at which this calamity occurred was the brightest age of Chinese painting. It was in the Sung dynasty, so rich in poetical and philosophical inspirations. It was the age when Confucianism had evolved a new meaning by the synthesis of Taoist and Buddhist ideals. It was the age when China was breaking through the crust of her ancient formalism, when political and economical experiments were tried on a vast scale. You will remember that the wonderful porcelain of China was the special product of this period of universal activity.

Painting was the art of the Sung people. It is to their masters that the later Chinese, and we Japanese, owe the higher conception of the quality of the line, or the manipulation of light and atmosphere within the condensed area of black and white treatment. Before them Chinese painting was beautiful in its repose, with the stately completeness of the style which we see in the remains of early Indian or Greco-Roman painting. The Sung artists emancipated Asiatic art from this classicism to turn

its gaze on the poetry of movement and seek new meanings of life in the intimate aspects of nature.

Alas! all these brilliant achievements of the Sung "illumination" were stopped in their full career by the advent of the Mongol conquerors. Their barborous rule crushed the vitality of the native civilization, and painting had barely a chance to survive. Thenceforward it is a decadence relieved here and there by a few exceptional geniuses. It was not the Mongols alone who inflicted such disaster on Chinese art. The Manchus came again from the North to impose another alien government. Wars and disturbances never ceased to harass the Celestial painter. What one regards to-day as representative of Chinese art is but a dismal shadow compared with what it was in the glorious age of the Tang or Sung masters.

The calamities imposed upon Art by the social conditions do not end here. Even in the days of peace we shall find that the so-called encouragement was by no means a boon to Art. The self-complacency of Society is apt to make itself believe that patronage is everything. On the contrary, the word "patronage" is in itself an insult. We want sympathy, not condescension. If Society really cared for good Art it would approach it with the respect due to all the noble functions of life. As it is, painting has been often called to the degrading service of Society. It was this that made the great Tang painter Yenrippen tell his children that he would disown them if they ever learned to paint.

Religion has been supposed to be the greatest inspiration of Art. It is often claimed that the loss of religions zeal caused the decadence of Art. But Art is a religion in itself. The mere fact of painting a holy subject does not constitute the holiness of the picture. The inherent nobleness and devotional attitude of the artist's mind towards the universe, alone stamp him as the religious painter. It has been remarked that in the picture of the bamboo by Sankoku lay the whole mystery of Taoism. The stereotyped representations of Christian or Buddhist subjects, of which, alas! there are so many, are not only a parody on religion, but a caricature of Art itself. Here we see another instance of the effects of misplaced patronage where even Religion made a

hand-maiden of Art, and thus robbed it of its legitimate expression.

Society, in posing as the patron, forgets that its true function is that of the mother. Art was rarely allowed a place to nestle on its bosom. The waywardness of Art born of her innate individuality has caused her to be treated as a step-child. The palmy days of painting were only when the painters had a recognized place in the social scheme. In old times painting was either a trade or an occupation of the religious. The great masters belonged to the guild if not to the cloister. They were Bellinis or Fra Angelicos.

It must not be inferred that the conditions in the past which gave to both the Italian and the Japanese painters a recognized place in society, are to be considered ideal or perfect. I am simply pointing to the fact that the position of Art was not anomalous, at least not as it is nowadays. The difficulty at the present time is that Society has broken the ancient harmony, and offers nothing to replace it. The Academy and the Institute are poor substitutes for the Medieval guilds or the Japanese monkhood,—the groups which kept up the traditions and furnished a home for Art.

The modern spirit, in emancipating the man, exiles the artist. The painter of to-day has no recognized function in the social scheme. He may be nearer nature, but is farther from humanity. Have we not noticed how intensely human are the pictures of all the great masters? Do we not notice how distant and cold are the modern productions? Art for Art's sake is a wail of Bohemia.

If we look on the surface of things, it would appear as if there were no time in history when Art was so honoured as it is to-day in Europe or America. The highest social distinctions are conferred on the successful painter and the amount of his remuneration is incomparably greater than that given the old master. Yet it is a matter of doubt whether he enjoys the fostering care and the stimulating influences which the community and brother-workers accorded him in the past. The very lack of finish and refinement in their work shows the difference between the new and the old. It is significant that in France, where the

relation between the artist and the community is better kept than elsewhere in the West, where traditions are still adhered to by its Institute, we find the most vital of contemporary achievements.

We of the East often wonder whether the West cares for Art. The desire seems to be not for Art, but for decorations,—decoration in the sense of subjugating beauty for the sake of display. In the rush for wealth there is no time for lingering before a picture. In the competition of luxury, the criterion is not that the thing should be more interesting, but that it should be more expensive. The paintings that cover the walls are not of your choice, but those dictated by fashion. What sympathy can you expect from Art when you offer none? Under such conditions Art is apt to recoil either with insidious flattery or with brutal sarcasm. Meanwhile the true Art weeps. Do not let my expressions offend you. Japan is eager to follow in your footsteps, and is fast learning not to care for Art.

The task of preserving Japanese painting against all these antagonistic influences is not easy. It is a matter of no small wonder that there has been produced within recent years a new school of national painting. Our hope for the future lies in the tenacity of the Japanese race, which has kept its individuality intact since the dawn of its history. Two generations cannot change the idiosyncrasies of twenty centuries. The bulk of the traditions still remains practically unharmed.

Of late years there has been a marked tendency to a deeper recognition of the best in the ancient culture of Japan. We are glad to see in the heroic sacrifices of our people in the war that the spirit of old Japan is not dead. Our greatest hope is in the very vitality of Art itself, which enabled it to thrive in spite of the various adversities which it encountered in the past. A grim pride animates us infacing the enormous odds which modern society has raised against us. At the present day we feel ourselves to be the sole guardians of the art inheritance of Asia. The battle must be fought out to the very last.

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DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AMONG THE INDO-ARYANS

By Prof. Sten Konow.

Introductory Remarks.

About a hundred years ago, in the year 1820, Ram Mohan Roy published his Precepts of Jesus, a highly interesting work which exercised a not inconsiderable influence. It dealt with the leading ideas underlying Christianity, and dealt with them in a way which showed that its author was filled with sympathy for the tenets of the religion of Europe.

One would have thought that his enterprise had been hailed with enthusiasm by European priests and clergymen. Such was not however the case. The learned doctors of divinity were rather displeased. They did not think that Ram Mohan dealt with Christianity in the proper way : his view was not the orthodox one ; and orthodoxy has often, in most countries, been considered as a necessary condition for being entitled to discuss religious matters.

In these lectures I am going to do just the opposite of what your illustrious compatriot did a hundred years ago, and I am venturing to do so without his deep penetration and intimate understanding of religious mentality. It would therefore be quite natural if some of you might think that my undertaking is a preposterous one and ask what qualifications I, a European, have for speaking to you about matters which are dear to your heart, and which you must be presumed to understand much better than I. I know that I run a grave risk, but still I take the risk, and I shall try to tell you why.

Since I was a boy in the Norwegian University I have devoted most of my time to the study of Indian History and Indian civilisation, and I have learnt to love India and to consider her as my sacred home. I have tried to follow the development of Indian thought and Indian religions during the centuries, and I willingly confess that it has seemed to me to be almost impossible

for a European to grasp the Indian mind behind all the different stages of that development. There appeared to be such a fundamental difference between many of the different forms which religion has taken in this vast country, that one might sometimes be inclined to doubt that it was the same mind which manifested itself in all of them.

In the hymns of the Rigveda we see a stormy, warlike people praising mighty heavenly gods and coveting their favour through sacrifice, well knowing nevertheless that the celestial kings had the power of blessing as well as of withholding their favour, in spite of hymns and sacrifice. Then, in the Brahmanas, we seem to be met with quite a different mentality : the sacrifice, the *yajña*, is all-powerful, and the great gods appear to have been reduced to mere puppets in the great drama, where the chief actors are the priests who know all the details of the complicated ritual. And again in the Upanishads, the knowledge, the deep insight itself, appears as the cosmic power ruling and framing the universe and leading man on to eternity.

Then follow, as a natural consequence of such a frame of mind, religions like Jainism and Buddhism, where it is pointed out that the way to bliss leads away from the multifarious life in which the Vedic Aryan rejoiced, away from the sacrifice which was so highly praised in the Brahmanas, through the abnegation of the I to realisation of eternal truth. And again, apparently in direct opposition to this view, we find the Bhágavatas, with their belief in a merciful personal God, who only asks man to meet Him in devotional love, and then draws him into His eternal heaven of bliss.

It would seem as if these different views cannot be reconciled, as if there were, within Indian religions, several different layers without any internal connection between them.

But an old Rishi has told us that such is not the case :

Eternal truth is one, but it is reflected in many ways in the minds of the singers.

He says this about his own time. He saw the differences, but he also saw the unity ; and he leads us to think that where we seem to see nothing but various tenets and beliefs, there may yet

be a uniting bond, an eternal reality, of which we only perceive the varying formulas.

It has gradually dawned upon me that the old Rishi was right, and that his saying has a wider application, which takes us outside of India, and is valid at least for all the Indo-European nations and peoples, who are descended from the same ancestors but who have carved out their destinies in different circumstances and in different ways.

It really seems to me that such is the case, that the case of religious thought is fundamentally the same in India and in ancient Europe, so that the apparent divergences are in fact nothing more than secondary accretions. I even think that this primitive base, which takes us back to the times when we were all savages, may at the present day be made the foundation of a religious belief, which will satisfy modern man, in new and purer forms, adapted to the requirements of the modern age, but still with the old stamp which has survived the changes of the ages.

He who is standing in the midst of a great wood, does not see the wood but only the trees. But from a distance the wood itself appears as a definite whole. And similarly, he who has grown up in the tenets of a definite religion, has some difficulty in realizing, as the ancient Rishi realized, that there is one eternal truth behind all religions. The historical scholar is in a better position, and he who follows him will perhaps acquire a deeper understanding of his own religion than if he does not look outside its frame. And he will become more devoted to his own faith when he sees that the same deep underground is to be found also outside. For he will then be thoroughly convinced that it must be of universal validity, an eternal truth.

That is my reason for venturing to speak to you about Indian religions. I have come to you not as a critic, but as a fellow worker in the search for eternal truth, in the hope that some of the results of my own studies may help you to find the way to your own hearts.

I know that the best thing would be to examine all the religions of the world. But it would be impossible to do so in a single series of lectures, and besides, no living scholar would be able to do so satisfactorily. Even to try to lay open the

fundamental conceptions of the Indo-European peoples would lead us too far. I have therefore chosen to limit myself to a historical review of the religions of Aryan India, with occasional remarks on connected phenomena in other parts of the Indo-European world.

It follows from the restriction I have imposed upon myself that there are several Indian forms of religious belief which I am not going to touch, *viz.*, the various conceptions and so-called superstitions of the non-Aryan tribes. They can only be satisfactorily dealt with in connection with similar beliefs in other parts of the world. I shall only occasionally have to draw attention to some cases where the Aryans seem to have assimilated ideas and notions which originally belonged to these peoples.

That such must have been the case is immediately apparent when we recall the history of the Aryans in India. They came into the country as foreign conquerors, and their language and their civilisation gradually spread over the vast continent. If we examine the Aryan vernaculars of India at the present day, it is easy to see that they are derived from the speech of the ancient conquerors, and even to-day we can see how this development is going steadily on. We have an interesting example of this process in our near neighbourhood. If we look into the language of the Santals, we shall find that a very considerable number of Santali words are borrowed from the Aryans. The grammatical system, on the other hand, has much greater power of resistance such Aryan words being inflected and constructed according to Santali Grammar.

A similar state of things can be observed in other districts *e.g.*, among the non-Aryan tribes of Nepal. We also there find a largely Aryan vocabulary and an essentially non-Aryan grammar. Now the appearance of Indo-Aryan vernaculars at the present day shows that they have all of them gone through a similar development. And the result is that we have before us a series of languages and speeches, which to all appearances are purely Aryan, but of which the grammatical system in many respects shows that the foreign non-Aryan element has been assimilated and has exercised its influence on the internal structure of the language.

Something similar must necessarily have happened during the long history of Indo-Aryan religions. When a people abandons its old beliefs and adopts a new religion, that never takes place in the same way as when a man gets a new dress. There always remain numerous traces of the old belief. The old gods are apparently replaced by new ones, the ancient rites by different ceremonies; in reality, however, the change is to a great extent only one of names, of vocabulary. The new gods are worshipped much in the same spirit as the old ones, the new ceremonies are based on the conceptions which were the leading ones in the old ritual: the change of religion is not a thorough change of spirit.

Among the different tribes and peoples which are, at the present day, to all appearances quite Aryanized, we must therefore expect to find numerous features which have been inherited not from the propagators of Aryan civilization, but from the old non-Aryan tribes which have been brought under the spell of Aryan religion and Aryan thought. It is often, at the present stage of our knowledge, all but impossible to analyse the complex ideas we are met with. In some cases, however, we may perhaps be able to point to some features or some gods, which are clearly not Aryan.

It is, on the other hand, impossible to say in such cases from which non-Aryan element the foreign features have come. The population of India is not uniform, and more than one race has contributed to its development. There still remain, in addition to the Aryan proper, two ethnic elements, the Dravidians and the so-called Kolarians. The former have still preserved their ancient tongues in Southern India, but it is probable that farther to the north several Dravidian tribes have, in the course of time, abandoned their home-tongue for some Aryan speech. Such has apparently to a much greater extent been the case with the Kolarians, who are often also called Mundas.

We would naturally infer from this state of things that Dravidian conceptions have contributed to the development of religious thought in the South, and perhaps in the North-West, where we find the Dravidian Brahuis settled in Beluchistan, while the non-Aryan elements in the North, and specially in the

East, are due to the influence of a Kolarian population, which has mostly been Aryanised in the course of the centuries during which Aryan civilisation has spread over India. And from the fact that the Dravidians have to a great extent retained their old languages, while the Kolarians have largely abandoned their old speech and adopted Aryan tongues, we would be inclined to infer that the Dravidians had reached a higher stage of development than the Kolarians when the period of Aryanising set in. Both Dravidians and Kolarians would accordingly have to be considered as aboriginal inhabitants of India.

Anthropologists and ethologists, it is true, have started a theory which appears, in a certain sense, a simplification. They speak of a Dravidian race, comprising both Dravidians and Kolarians, and presenting several well defined ethnic features : a long skull, a broad nose, thick projecting lips and wavy, curly hair. The type is negroid and shows some similarity with that of Australian aboriginals. The stronghold of the race is the Dravidian South and some hilly tracts in Northern India. The Aryan conquerors came into India from the North-West, where they had, in prehistoric times, formed one people with the ancestors of the present Iranians. The Aryan features are still prevalent in the Punjab and in Rajputna and southwards.

All these seem to point to the conclusion that the Aryans, when they entered India, were met with the ancestors of this so-called Dravidian race, who would accordingly have to be considered as the Dâsas and Dasyus spoken of in Vedic literature, the aboriginal inhabitants of India.

In this connection it is worth recalling the fact that Southern India is, geologically speaking, the oldest part of India, older than the great upheavel through which the Himalayas were raised, and dating back into a period when the plain of Hindustan was lying deep down below the surface of an old ocean. This old Southern Continent was of a much larger extent than at the present day. The Western Ghats mark the old water-shed of the plateau, which extended far to the West, where we have, at the present day, the Arabian Sea. It would accordingly be possible that this aboriginal race was originally connected with other aboriginal races outside of India, *e.g.* in Australia. And

the Dravidians and the Kolarians would both be the descendants of that ancient race, thus settled in India since prehistoric times.

Everything accordingly seems to fit, and we should seem to have every reason for accepting this Dravidian race-theory in its entirety.

There are, however, grave objections which, in my opinion make it impossible to do so. The anthropological survey of the Indian people is not so complete that we can use its results with full confidence, and even as it is, it shows that there are, within the Dravidian race, considerable variations in features, which point to the conclusion that there have been numerous crossings and intercrossings; that the so-called Dravidian race is not a uniform entity but consists of more than one ethnic element. And these conclusions are strengthened by a consideration of the present day languages spoken by the members of the race.

I have already mentioned that we have before us two linguistic families, the Dravidian, represented by languages such as Tamil, Telegu and Kanarese, and the Kolarian or Munda family, to which Santali, Mundari, Ho, Kurku, etc., belong. The Dravidian family is, at the present day, essentially restricted to Southern, and parts of Central India, but comprises an isolated language, that of the Brahuis in Beluchistan. Outside of India it has not been possible to point to any speech connected with Dravidian. Some scholars have thought that certain features in the languages of the Australian aboriginals remind us of Dravidians; and others are inclined to think of a distant connection with certain ancient languages of Mesopotamia. But they have all failed to advance convincing proofs in favour of their theories, and at the present stage of knowledge we are constrained to consider Dravidian as an isolated language.

Kolarian tongues, on the other hand, belong to a large linguistic family comprising numerous languages and dialects in further India and on the Islands of the Indian Sea and the Pacific. The Austrian scholar, Pater Schmidt, has called this family Austric and thought it possible to point to some features from which he infers that these are also ethnic ties between the numerous tribes speaking Austric tongues.

Now the anthropologists are at the present day disinclined to lay much stress on the existence of different languages within the tribes belonging to one and the same race, and we have several examples of peoples who have adopted the speech of other races. The linguistic history of India is a good instance of such a development. Still I think that most scholars will agree in the conclusion that, wherever we find different linguistic families represented within one and the same race, there must, at some time or other, have been intercrossings between more than one ethnic element. And we must, I think, infer that such has also been the case in India in pre-Aryan times. From the fact that Kolarian is connected with numerous languages outside of India, while no speech related to Dravidian has been traced anywhere else in the world, we would be inclined to draw the conclusion that the aboriginals of India spoke some proto-Dravidian tongue, while the Kolarian languages have been imported from abroad.

But then we should expect to find a similar state of things as in the case of the Indo-Aryan vernaculars, which have been brought to India by foreign invaders, but which, in phonology and in grammatical principles, show numerous traces of the influence of the speech of the older race or races which sat in India before the Aryans came in. If Dravidian were once the language of all India, we would expect to find reminiscences of Dravidian grammatical principles in the Kolarian tongues.

Such is not, however, the case. Dravidian and Kolarian differ fundamentally, in phonology, in vocabulary and in grammar, and it is therefore very unlikely that one of the two once prevailed over the whole territory, and that the other one was subsequently engrafted on the same stock. It seems to me that we must necessarily draw the conclusion that there are, from the most remote times, two different strata in the pre-Aryan population, represented day by the Dravidians on one side and the Kolarians on the other.

But how then should we explain the apparent similarity in ethnic features which has led anthropologists to speak of one fairly uniform Dravidian race?

I cannot see any solution of this difficulty other than the assumption that we have, in the pre-Aryan population of India,

not one, but three different ethnic elements. There was an old Negroid race, once settled over the South and the forests and hills further to the North, but which was subsequently overlaid by the Dravidians in the South and by the Kolarians in the North and East. Both these races have to a great extent lost their ethnic features, just as the Brahuis in Beluchistan among their Iranian neighbours, and both can only relatively be called aboriginal, though they were no doubt in India before the Aryans.

In support of this theory I can only point to some some few details.

The existence of the Dravidian dialect in Beluchistan has often been urged in favour of the assumption that the Dravidians have come into India from abroad. And there is also one curious grammatical feature which points in the same direction.

We know that the various tenses of the Indo-European verb were real tenses, with tense suffixes and personal terminations. In Indian vernaculars, however, these tenses have to a large extent been replaced by participles. This is not an Indo-European feature, and we are inclined to think of the influence of a common non-Aryan substratum. Now it is a curious fact that the Dravidian tenses are in reality participles, and it is perhaps allowable to infer from this state of things, coupled with the evidence of Brahui, that tongues related to Dravidian were once spoken in the territory where the Indian and Iranian Aryans settled in pre-historic times, and that the influence of this substratum can be felt in the various Indo-Aryan and Iranian languages of the present day.

I know very well that such indications do not *prove* anything. Still I think it worth while to draw attention to them, and so far as I can see, it is extremely likely that the Dravidians have once, in a remote past, immigrated into India from the North-West and made themselves masters of our ancient Negroid population, especially in the South, and in parts of the North-West. Later on the Aryans followed, drove the Dravidians out of the North-West, and gradually laid the south under the spell of their higher civilization. The amalgamation has been so complete that it is, at the present day, impossible to distinguish Dravidian and Aryan elements in the common civilisation. There cannot,

however, be any doubt that the Dravidians must have had their share in the development.

In this connection it is also worth while to remind you of the great discoveries made in Sind and the Punjab by my old friends R. D. Banerjee and Daya Ram Sahni. We have been told that traces have been found of an ancient and highly developed civilisation, akin to that of the Sumerians and dating back 3,000 years B. C. It has further been stated that this civilisation seems to have extended into Beluchistan, and future finds may perhaps show that it was actually linked up with that of the Sumerians.

Are we here faced with the remnants of an ancient Dravidian or rather proto-Dravidian culture which was once established from Mesopotamia to Sind? And why did it disappear centuries before the oldest Indo-Aryan monuments were constructed? At the present day we can only put the questions. If this ancient civilisation came to an end about 3,000 years B.C. it is tempting to connect its disappearance with the Aryan conquest of India. But in that case it is extremely likely that the invaders took over more than one feature from the ancient culture of their predecessors.

Turning now to the Kolarians, we have already seen that their languages are not, like those of the Dravidians, isolated forms of speech, but belong to a widely spread linguistic, the so-called Austric, family. None of the tribes speaking Austric tongues, possess an ancient literature. Some of these tribes, later on, reached a high state of development, but then the framework seems throughout to have been borrowed from Aryan India. We should accordingly expect to find that the Kolarians have only contributed primitive and savage ideas and conceptions to the religious development of India, that the state of things with them has always been as in the case of the Santals at the present day : their religious ideas being comparatively rude and primitive, and where we find higher conceptions such as the beliefs in a highest God behind and above all the spirits and demons, his very name, Thakur, showing that we have to do with a loan from the Aryans.

There are, however, some indications which point in a different direction. It is a curious fact that the Indian craftsman,

the predecessor of the painter and the sculptor, frequently comes from the Non-Aryan castes. Such an important branch of Indian lore as the numerous popular stories and tales, which have played such an important role in the history of folklore all over the world, is by tradition principally referred to the Dekkhan, where we have every reason for supposing that Kolarians have formed a prominent part of population. The old name of Indian actors and of the Indian drama, *nata* and *nátaka,* are no doubt of Aryan origin. But the actors must have something to do with the non-Aryan *nat-carti* of the present day, and in the ancient ritual a Sûdra was introduced as the seller of *soma* in an important ceremony.

We get the impression that some of the higher branches of Indian civilisation, such as have something to do with art, may partly have their origin in non-Aryan, and permanently Kolarian, Arts and Crafts.

And quite recently, the famous French scholar, Sylvain Levi, whose learning and whose penetrating mind you have learnt to admire here in Visva-bharati, has put together numerous facts, which already point to the conclusion that there was once, before the Aryan conquest, and probably also before the Dravidian invasion, an ancient civilisation, extending over a vast territory, and created by Austric tribes, and that India must have been one of the strongholds of this civilisation.

At the present day that civilisation has disappeared, having been modified and absorbed by the Aryans. But it seems to be necessary to assume that the ancestors of the Kolarians, whom the Aryan conquerors fought and subdued, were not barbarians but had reached a comparatively high state of development. And in that case they must have had a large share in the building up of Indian civilisation and also in the religious history of the country. It is not, however, possible to draw attention to details and separate features which should be considered to be of Kolarian origin. We can only say that there must be several such, and that they are most likely to be found in the ideas and notions which have framed the daily worship of the Indians during the centuries.

The Aryans have been the leaders in Indian civilization and Indian thought, and the vast religious literature of India is almost

entirely due to them. The historical student will have to base his conclusions mainly on that literature. An analysis of the popular ideas and conceptions which have not been reduced to writing, can only be made with reference to the state of things at the present day, and for the past we are restricted to drawing general conclusions. Moreover, even this popular side of religious development has, at the present day, received such a strong Aryan stamp, that we are easily led to believe that it is chiefly derived from Aryan sources.

In my present lectures I shall, therefore, as I have already said, only try to follow the development of the Aryan element in Indian religions. The remarks which I have just made show, however, that it is necessary to be on one's guard, and I cannot hope to be able to avoid mistakes. The history of the religious development of the Indo-Aryans is not, and should not be, a review of unbroken growth from one single seed. It must also comprise the numerous crossings which have taken place and sometimes largely modified the picture, and we need not be perturbed if we occasionally make mistakes in our analysis, for such mistakes are not fatal.

THE ORIGIN OF CASTE

A Study of Modern Views.

By KSHITISHPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAY.

It has been remarked by a distinguished student of Indian ethnology that, from the nature of the case, the origin of caste is an insoluble problem. I mention this hopeful prophecy at the very beginning, in order that the sketchy character of this paper may be the more readily excused. Moreover, in this particular case, the available facts run into volumes, and a fair examination and co-ordination of them all would form an essay too long, perhaps, for even students of anthropology to read through.

The earliest scientific hypotheses put forward about caste are to be found in the Hindu law-books, and perhaps in the most elaborate form in the Institutes of Manu. Unfortunately, however, the terms Vaisya, Kshatriya, Bráhmana and, still more, the term Sûdra, are not sufficiently explained therein to enable us to follow the description given in terms of these. Further, no attempt was made, probably because it was not possible, to include within these theories, the social organisation of the whole of India.

All later theories in the law-books are open to the first charge, and also, to some extent undoubtedly, to the condemnation brought forward by modern scholars, that a good part is drawn from imagination without a sufficient basis of fact. Though I personally believe that a good deal of what is at present unintelligible and seemingly unreal in these early speculations will probably, at some future date, be capable of elucidation, and will then throw much light on the early migrations and fusion of races, yet it must be admitted that, for the time being, they have to be left on one side, and that the problem may best be tackled by beginning directly with the facts available in modern times.

I shall therefore pass on to modern views of caste, with such comments as seem needful in the different cases.

The two earliest attempts to explain caste on the basis of the existing state of affairs were made by Sir Denzil Ibbettson in the Punjab, and Mr. C. J. Nesfield in the United Provinces.

Ibbettson studied the facts available in his province, and he summed up his conclusions about the origin of caste in that area as follows :

(1) At first there was the tribal division common to all primitive societies.

(2) As civilization grew up, the guilds based on hereditary occupation came into existence.

(3) The priests, the Brahmans, in order to preserve their prestige and power, insisted on the hereditary nature of their occupation and the necessity of honouring all persons of priestly descent.

This they supported with all the weight of religion, elaborating from the Hindu ideas of cosmogony, a purely artificial set of rules regulating marriage and intermarriage, and declaring certain kinds of food and occupations as pure, impure, or indifferent.

They thus acquired a degree of power unparalleled elsewhere.

Ibbettson suggests, in short, that after the guild system had developed in India, with the progress of arts and industries, the hereditary nature of occupations was utilised by the Brahmans for their own advantage. He is of opinion that, naturally, the descendants of Brahmans soon grew too numerous to be all priests, but as they did not wish to relinquish the exceptional privilege and honour they obtained as priests, they made community of descent instead of occupaition, the test of rank. In one word, instead of only the priests ranking as Brahmans, all descendants of Brahmans ranked as priests, although they might be only nominally, or not at all, connected with sacred duties.

This unusual achievement is considered by Ibbettson to have been possible for the Brahmans because of the specially high position they held. He is however careful to explain that he does not mean that the Brahmans invented the principle which they thus turned to their own purpose ; on the contrary the rudiments of it are found in all primitive societies and it was only the extraordinary power gained by the Brahmans that led their teaching,

probably almost unconsciously, to take the form that tended most effectually to preserve such power unimpaired.

This process, Ibbettson concludes, was quite a slow one and the provisions in the Manu Samhita for the elevation of castes in the social scale, show definitely how rules originally elastic gradually hardened into rigid bars.

One of the difficulties of this hypothesis is, to explain how the Brahmans, or priests, at all acquired such great power in India as to enable them thus to create caste,—a power never enjoyed by priesthood elsewhere in the world.

Priests have been faced with the similar difficulty of growing numbers in other places as well, but nowhere else have they been able to avail themselves of such device to any such extent as in India. Thus in Kashmir and in Nepal, the Buddhist clergy married and were forced to follow secular pursuits to meet the needs of family life. Consequently they formed a group comparable to the hypothetical group of Brahmans of Ibbettson. Yet, with the example of India before them, they did not succeed in forming caste among the mass of the people.

Similar is the case of the Lamas of Tibet. Although as celibate monks they do not form quite a good parallel, still it is well known that Tibet is one of the most priest-ridden countries, and the Lamas have exceptional influence. Yet, although the unrestricted admission of novices to monasteries has rendered the struggle for existence very keen among the priests, no attempt has been made to form a special caste of the relatives of Lamas, within which the priesthood should be confined.

The second defect of Ibbettson's theory is, that it does not give any explanation of the curious rules about purity and impurity of certain kinds of food, or of the restrictions about taking food of a particular kind from others. To suggest that these are purely fantastic customs adopted by the Brahmans, is merely an admission of failure to indicate the solution.

The other early theorist on caste, Mr. Nesfield, was very much impressed by what he called the fundamental unity of the Indian race. He considered the Indians as homogeneous physically, showing that the handful of Aryan invaders had been absorbed

in the vast mass of the aboriginal population, leaving no mark on their appearance.

Nesfield, therefore, suggested that caste had nothing to do with race, and was developed merely because of the gradual evolution of arts and industries. He pointed out that at the bottom of the social scale in the United Provinces come the primitive tribes, the Tharus, Kangars and others, whom he considers to be the last remnants of the undiluted aboriginal Indian savages. Next come hunters like the Baheliyas, and fishermen such as the Dhimars. Then follow the pastoral Gadariyas and Ahirs, and finally the great mass of agriculturists and artisans, with the lordly Rajput and the priestly Brahman crowning the whole structure.

The artisans were also graded in a similar way amongst themselves, the basket-worker holding the lowest place, with the weaver, potter and oilman in the middle, and the metal-workers, tailors and confectioners in the highest group.

Apart from the fact that Nesfield sometimes jumbles up in a single grade such curious combinations as Kayastha, Bhangi or sweeper, Bhat or bard-cum-genealogist, and Nai or barber, great difficulties have to be faced by any such evolutionary hypothesis.

First of all, it is acknowledged on all hands that original inventions of such systems are not so prolific in different parts of the world.

Even if, however, in spite of its unique character, such an independent origin be granted, the question arises that, as the creation of these grades was necessarily slow, and hence the chance of limiting them to definite groups small, whence arose any gradations at all? Why were not such grades formed elsewhere in the world? Further why are they accompanied by such curious rules of marriage and commensality and also of taboos?

All these questions Nesfield answers by the old, old retort that the Brahmans invented them to increase their power. This again amounts to nothing but an admission of failure to solve the problem.

Apart from this, there is a fundamentally wrong assumption in Nesfield's hypothesis. He assumes the occupations followed

by the castes in order of social ascendancy, to form a series of increasing complex form.

This is however highly doubtful. Weaving with looms, furnished with heddles and reeds, and the making of pottery with wheels, certainly came to be invented, at least introduced, in the ancient countries of which the past history is fairly well-known, after copper working had come into vogue, or at most, at about the same time; yet in the U. P. the Kumhar (potter) and Tati (weaver) rank below the Tamot (coppersmith). Further this theory cannot be extended to any other province of India, as the different artisans rank differently in the several provinces. And, in order to be defensible, the hypothesis would have to be formulated that the order of inventions was greatly altered in the several areas of Bengal, Bombay and Madras.

Therefore, while it may be admitted that some of the less complex and comparatively humble occupations were known in India earlier than the more developed arts, yet such a statement cannot be accepted as a whole, and certainly does not explain the origin of caste.

The next worker in the field was Sir Herbert Risley, the Superintendent of the Ethnological Surveys. The difficulty of explaining the uniqueness of caste in India was suggested by him to be due to the fact that in India alone were the Aryans brought into close contact with an unequivocally black race. The sense of difference of color, which plays such an undoubtedly large part in the relations of men, was perhaps even keener among these ancient fair-skinned invaders.

Risley points out that the opponents of the Vedic people are called by them black, noseless, coarse featured, of low stature, and so on. He suggests that this gives a fairly accurate anthropological definition of the Dravidian tribes of to-day. He adds that this repulsion due to physical differences, was supplemented by disagreements of customs, tribal structure and religion. The conclusion is obvious that the motive principle of Indian caste is to be sought in the antipathy of the higher race for the lower, of the fair-skinned Aryan for the darker Dravidian.

Risley meets one objection, which immediately occurs, that while the principle in question may possibly apply to the major

groups, it fails to account for the vast network of intricate divisions which the caste system now presents; for the differences of type which distinguish the various trading, agricultural, pastoral, and fishing castes from each other are hardly sharp enough to have brought the sentiment of race antipathy into play.

Risley's reply to this is that the numerous smaller groups came into being under the influence of fiction. He goes on to illustrate and explain what he means, by giving examples from Bengal. He tries to show that in this province the continual contact of Aryan and Dravidian has created a series of endogamous groups which may roughly be classified as Ethnic, Provincial or Linguistic, Territorial or Local, Functional or Occupational, Sectarian and Social. In the first of these classes, the race basis is palpable and acknowledged. The others have been generated by the fiction that men who speak a different language, who dwell in a different district, who worship different gods, who observe different social customs, who follow a different profession, or practice the same profession in a slightly different way, must be of a fundamentally different race.

As has been pointed out by Sénart, Risley has arrived, after various detours, finally to the same old Hindu theory of different degrees of intermixtures and an infinite number of permutations thereof.

It has been pointed out by Sanskrit scholars that Risley did not properly understand the import of the Vedas and the Smritis and unduly emphasised the condemnation of colour by the so-called Aryans. I shall here state merely two of the pieces of evidence that have been brought forward against this view. First of all, these Aryans could legally take non-Aryan wives, for which there were definite rules; secondly the issue of these marriages after inter-marrying with the Aryans for seven generation could become pure Aryans. It need hardly be emphasised that such rules do not betray an extraordinary horror of the hypothetical black aborigines.

I should also like to point out the fact that, in Africa, where men of the fair-skinned races did penetrate into the interior in early times, caste did not grow up. If sharp physical

differences created caste, one would suppose that the Caucasian type would find a sharper contrast in the Negroid in Africa than in a hypothetical sharply contrasted black race in India. Moreover, evidence from authropometry shows definitely that the contrast in India was certainly not so great as Risley would make out.

It will have been noted that the three important theories of caste come from workers in three different provinces of North India.

Ibbettson, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, was most impressed by the elasticity of caste bonds in that Western province. On the basis of his study of the growth of the living organism in that place, he considered that he had found the solution. The mistake was that he did not take into account the force of centuries of tradition, and also the extraordinary jumble of cultures in the area where he worked.

Nesfield, from an examination of the somatic characteristics of the people of the U. P., was led to formulate his hypothesis of the fundamental unity of race in India, and from this very naturally followed a single scheme of evolution.

Risley, who worked in Bengal mainly, was early struck by the undoubted intermixture of races that had taken place in this region and, impressed by what he observed, he sought to overcome the difficulty of uniqueness of caste by means of this fact alone.

The next worker in the field, M. Sénart had the advantage of studying carefully all these three different view points, and not being a worker in India itself, he was not obsessed by the particular speciality of any province. In addition, a profound knowledge of European lore was brought by him to bear on the problem.

As a result of his investigations, Sénart suggests that the uniqueness of the development of caste in India was the result of physical isolation. Parallel developments, he points out, had occurred in Greece and Rome. He shows that the curiae in Rome, the phratry of Greece, and the gotra of India closely correspond. The bounds of exogamy existed, and membership of phratries, as of gotras, was limited to offsprings of families belonging to the

group. He also shows that occupation was to some extent hereditary in these places.

The strange rules barring commensality likewise find parallels elsewhere. The food cooked at the sacred fire symbolised the unity of the family, and the religious sentiment attached to it is the explanation of the rules of the table. The expulsion of an offender from caste by solemnly pouring out water from his vessel after filling it, and the modern stopping of hukka and pani are similar to the interdiction of fire and water in Rome, while the body that wields sway, the panchayet, was undoubtedly parallelled in the ancient councils of tribes in Greece, Rome, Germany and elsewhere.

After pointing out these parallels, Sénart passes on to suggest reasons why the national unity which finally absorbed the different groups in Europe, was not attained in India. Here he takes account of the possible factors suggested by previous workers, and adds some of his own.

His hypothesis is that the Aryan invaders of India had already in them the germs of the caste system. To this basic factor were added the facts of hostile contact with a race of different colour and physique and of inferior culture. This opposition, the consequent need of security, the contempt of the vanquished,—all these increased the native arrogance of the invaders and reinforced the several beliefs and prejudices which guarded from intermixture the sections into which they were divided.

Further, the vastness of the country tended to separate the groups and to multiply divisions. As difficulties diminished, and a more settled form of social life grew up, the need for artisans was sharply felt everywhere, and these being in wide demand, were widely scattered. In the pursuit of their profession they had to come in intimate contact with the aboriginal people and some intermixture undoubtedly resulted. As there was no strong political power to wield the whole into a cohesive mass, the fissiparous tendency proceeded unchecked.

When later on some kind of examination was instituted about purity of descent, the priests who, by reason of the privileges they had gained owing to the growing complexity of rites and

ceremonies, had been able better to conserve their purity of descent, claimed and obtained the highest rank, albeit sharing it with the royal races. The artisans, originally of the same stock but now under the ban of intermixture, sank in position, and finally became still more diluted with aboriginal blood.

It must be admitted that Sénart's theory, as it stands, is not lightly to be gainsaid. The factors suggested undoubtedly played an important part in the evolution of caste. The main defect of his theory however is, that it has not taken account of the details; and further, although the suggestion about the Aryans coming with the germ of a caste system, and this latter embryo developing because of the environment, is very tempting, there are certain facts which stand in the way.

In Sénart's hypothesis two things are assumed:

(1) That the Aryans—in the sense of Vedic people—were highly superior to the people they found in India, represented by jungle tribes at the present time.

(2) That the caste structure is essentially the same all over India.

Both these assumptions are unjustified.

If an invading people come into a country in fairly large numbers, as the Vedic Aryans are postulated to have done, something very like uniform pressure is brought to bear upon the people, in front as well as on the flanks of the forward wave of migration. In such case what happens is, that the earlier people are driven into what might be termed safety pockets,—places in the country which allow of a fair livelihood, but which are difficult of access to invaders. In India, there are some such places and the chief among them in North India, are Nepal, Assam, and Chota Nagpore though the last has to be distinguished from the other two as not being suitable for comfortable existence with only a primitive knowledge of arts and industries.

If, therefore, the people of the plains were driven out by the incoming Aryan tide, we should expect to find remnants of that culture in these places. Investigation shows that such is actually the case, but it also definitely brings out that their culture were not so inferior as has been made out by Sénart and others, and

also that these earlier people were themselves an intermixture with some fine-featured race.

Physical anthropology does not count definite quantitative data from Nepal, nor to any large extent from Assam, but so far as the careful observation of trained observers go, they agree that the high castes in these places have undoubtedly Caucasian features, although Mongolian admixtures occur. The characteristics of their culture show that they passed through India.

We have therefore to admit that the so-called Aryans were preceded by a fine-featured, cultured race in India. Now, the remnants of this migration into Nepal and Assam show definitely that, while guilds were developed in their society, and the cultured invaders tended to preserve their racial purity, caste did not evolve. Secondly the peculiar rules about commensality are absent to a large extent.

This much at least follows that a fine-featured, cultured race could penetrate into India, diffusing their civilisation and intermixing to some extent with the people, yet although the country was vast and the aborigines black, caste as an institution was not evolved. It has therefore to be admitted that while all these factors certainly tend to help the crystallisation of caste, yet they are not sufficient for its initiation.

The second assumption of Sénart was, that the caste organisation is fairly uniform all over India. But actual examination shows that the structure in Bengal is almost the reverse of that in the U.P., while Orissa bears no direct relation to either. If the different linguistic areas of Madras are now examined, the confusion passes all limits.

One conclusion, however, emerges definitely from an analysis of the social structure in different parts of India. It is that there were migrations of culture to India before the Vedic Aryans came, and that, roughly at least, these correspond to the culture remnants found in Nepal and Assam.

It is not possible to indicate within the limits of this paper all the points of agreement I have been able to detect. I should like however to point out two facts :

(1) That the food and drink used by one at least of the

earlier migrations differed distinctively from that of the later Aryan migration.

(2) That the rules of marriage were comparatively simple and elastic. Divorce was easy and widow marriage permitted. That among the common people whom they influenced the relation of the sexes before marriage was similar to the present state of affairs in the Munda and Oraon community, conception being usually followed by marriage.

I therefore suggest that the inception of caste was due to the hostile contact of a later cultured people, presumably the Vedic Aryans, with an earlier cultured race. In the struggle for existence that ensued, each group sought to increase its man-power by enlisting the aboriginal population as far as possible on its side.* Analysis of the cultures show that while one had the advantage of earlier settlement and greater experience of the country and its peoples, the other balanced it to a large extent by greater numbers and their superior knowledge of certain arts.

In order to influence and enlist the comparatively primitive aborigines, it was necessary to benefit them to some extent; for this reason, and also to utilise them properly, they had to be taught some at least of the arts that were brought by the migrants. It was, at the same time equally important to prevent a leakage of such knowledge to the opposite camp and to the people in general. The general sentiment of contempt that a half civilised people feel, after contact with a superior culture, for their own uncultured brethren, probably supplied a powerful check. But the most effective limit was found in :

(1) The wide difference of food used by the rival peoples, the same substance being taboo to one people, and indifferent to the other.

(2) The difference in the religious belief and the gods worshipped.

(3) The opposite character of the relations of the sexes among the two sets of people, one tending towards

*Cf. the rival solicitation of the "masses" by the different political parties of the day.—*Ed.*

easy union, the other towards immolating the widow with her deceased husband.

I suggest that these were consciously or unconciously moulded into rigid bars about the groups that were formed. The vastness of the country, as Sénart opines, led to scattering; consequently there was greater difficulty of self-preservation, adding thereby to the stringency of the safeguards. On this hypothesis the smaller local caste groups (sub-castes) were the first to grow, being later classed as one caste on the common basis of occupation and tradition.

Such a multiple-migration hypothesis of caste overcomes the difficulty of diversity in the social structure in different parts of India. For on analysis it appears that there were two to three distinct culture migrations in most parts of India, before history proper begins; now, although caste might originate by hostile contact between two cultures, there was no reason why the same migrants should triumph in every part of the country.

Further the third migration might have brought in other new elements. Consequently, the problem is reduced to analysing the different social structures in different parts of India and reconstructing therefrom the different culture migrations.

So far as I have been able to do this, I have not met with any insuperable difficulty. Obviously, however, such an analysis cannot be attempted within the present limits.

THE SONG BIRD.

By RABINDRANATH.

When the evening steals on western waters,
Thrills the air with wings of homeless shadows,
When the sky is crowned with star-gemmed silence
And the dreams dance on the deep of slumber ;
When the lilies lose their faith in morning
And in panic close their hopeless petals,
There's a bird which leaves its nest in secret,—
Seeks its song in trackless paths of heaven.

CULTURE AND TECHNICAL PROGRESS

By Count Hermann Keyserling.

There has been much talk in Europe during the last decades, about the opposition between Culture and Civilisation; in particular in Germany, where Oswald Spengler's famous book "The Decline of the West" is almost entirely built up upon the assumption of this opposition. Culture in the real sense, as it was manifested in ancient Babylonia, India and China, in ancient Greece and the Europe of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Rocco periods, and Civilization in the modern, purely external and technical sense, are indeed two very different things. There is no doubt either, that in the modern world, the former is no longer to be found except in small groups, which count ever less and less in the movement of history.

No wonder, therefore, that many of the best in our days feel frankly inimical towards civilization. Unfortunately, however, repudiation or negation has never arrested the process of Destiny. Technical progress, the soul of this civilization, is nothing less than mankind's fate for the next centuries to come. Fate can only be overcome by reaching a plane beyond the range of its possible action. It is about this that I venture to put forward, in the following, a few suggestions.

What does the word *Culture* really mean? It means the correspondence of the inside and the outside of life in this sense, that all the forms of a given existence are the immediate expression of a living spirit. This short definition includes everything that can be stated about the essential meaning of Culture: *viz.*, that every cultural manifestation is tied to a living past and in so far implies responsibility; that it is symbolical in the twofold sense, that anything "cultural," on the one hand, gives, expression to Significance, "and on the other, incarnates the latter in the forms of a corresponding image; that it is exclusive and therefore strictly confined, like any organism, and belongs to a unified whole which is being mirrored by every single manifestation.

"Culture" is really a spiritual organism. If this be so, then it is clear from what moment onwards external civilization, which can very well mean culture, is such no longer : when its expression does no longer mean anything inward ; and since the latter is manifestly the case within the whole modern westernized world, it is undoubtedly true, as Spengler and many others maintain, that we are living in an age of civilization as opposed to an age of culture.

There are many who relate this state of decay—for such indeed it is—to our "progress" in the technical and mechanical sense. And this much is certain : the unlimited applicability of any product of Technique, unlimited in the sense of space, time and any other bonds, contradicts the very spirit of real culture ; a manifesation which is possible everywhere at all times, cannot represent an immediate expression of Spirit. And in so far Technical progress undoubtedly leads, not to cultural accomplishment and consummation, but to barbarization.

Wherever mechanical civilization spreads, no life-form of the pre-technical age resists in the long run ; it is bound to die out. This is proved to-day even by those exclusive sets and classes in France and England whose consolidated culture succeeded until recently in resisting disintegration : for any one to whom cinema and radio, racing, aviating and globetrotting, in their negation of all limits of time and space, are matters of course, it is simply impossible to remain bound by and to forms of life, whose very possibility depends on narrow internal as well as external confines.

The same will appear more and more in the East also ; it will appear there more strikingly still because the contrast between the Indian caste system with all its restrictions, or the Chinese code of rites with all its complications and intricacies (to point out but two examples), and the ways of modern life, is much greater than any contrast between the cultured West of old and the merely civilized West of to-day. Ancient culture is dying fast all over this planet ; it is dying irresistibly. And there can be no doubt that this is due to technical progress more than to anything else.

The recognition of this fact calls forth, as a typical reaction, two different attitudes.

Some people—they are particularly numerous in the European countries ruined by the War—deem that culture in the old inward sense is no longer possible upon Earth, or at any rate upon its Western hemisphere. Others—these are more frequent in the East—expect salvation from a return to pre-technical conditions. It is no use arguing with the first named, for if a man does not believe in something, he assuredly does not want it either, with any important part of his soul, and he therefore cannot be made to realize his error.

The attitude of the other groups could be right, if the processes of nature were reversible,—if mankind in particular could go back upon any attained state at all. But this it cannot; all historical processes are essentially irreversible. And this means in the case of our particular argument: never more, whatever idealists may hope, will machinery vanish from this world; the machine will go on gaining victory after victory until it has conquered every single spot on earth.

The chief reason for this is the fact, which apparently has so far failed to strike most thinkers, that technical achievement means nothing extraordinary, but on the contrary, a manifestation of the obvious. As all mathematical truths, however difficult to grasp they may seem, are essentially obvious, for they express the intrinsic laws which rule both body and mind, just so are even the most astonishing technical performances. This alone explains why they appeal most to the least cultured classes and races. The United States first became mechanised of all countries, because at the beginning of the process the Americans were, of all Westerners, the most uncultured; in the same way, extreme mechanisation of life meets to-day with the least inner resistance in bolshevic Russia.

The true significance of the facts became first clear to me on that memorable day when I discovered that my little son, then three years old, who shows no particular disposition for mechanics, understands perfectly the real nature of a motor-car, which to me has remained a sort of uncanny mystery. Mechanics

belong to the obvious side of things, just as mathematics do. The question is merely to realise their obviousness.

It is, of course, not everybody's business to do this independently, or for the first time. But then invention is in no case everybody's business. The obviousness of a truth can only be gauged by the percentage of people who realize it at once, when it is put before their eyes. Now the technical achievements of our age appear surely obvious to a greater number than did any cultural manifestations since the age of stone. There will soon be no human being on earth of more than ape-like intelligence, who will not consider the Radio as simple a thing as the Multiplication-table.

I think this short train of thought must have refuted, once and for all, the arguments of all those who preach renouncement of technical progress. It is absolutely impossible to stop an evolution which meets with the understanding approval of all but an infinitesimal minority. And it is just as impossible to stop this evolution in the East as it is in the West, notwithstanding all temperamental differences. If Buddhism and Islam became the creed of millions in their day, because their gospel brought with it the abolishment of many of the social disabilities which prevented the rise of the majority to better conditions of life, the same will be true a thousand times more in this irreligious age.

But the same train of thought also shows that the inevitable need not imply a cultural catastrophe. If technical achievements belong to the essentially obvious, then they will also be thought of as obvious before long; and this will necessarily lead to the result that they will soon no longer command any particular interest.

Even to-day they do not mean, in Europe at any rate, anything like what they meant twenty years ago. Their quality of surprise has gone; it will never be born again, even if it should become possible one day to bring down the moon by some technical freak, for on principle everything that is possible henceforth on this line can be foreseen. As to the practical side of the matter—there is no doubt whatever that the most astonishing of our latest technical performances will meet with the same fate as did the bycicle. While in the beginning there were but gentlemen

riders, this vehicle is now no longer a means at all to gain distinction, and where this is not the case, ambition finds no food.

Now what will happen when all mechanical inventions will have become obvious and uninteresting in the same sense and degree? They will mean to the mind the same and nothing more than did previously the material out of which the engineer manufactured his engines, which means, in its turn, that they will have become the basis, *unnoticed in itself,* of all future thoughts and desires. Then the machine world will mean to practical men exactly the same and no more, as the world of nature did in the pre-technical age. Well, from this moment the opposition between Culture and Civilization, which is valid enough to-day, will have become obsolete, for the civilized condition will then have become the basis of *all* human life Then the level of all possible problems will appear transposed. And this everywhere in the upward and not in the downward sense.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that man as the Lord of Nature is a greater being than man as Nature's subject. *And then culture in the previously determined sense of "life-form as immediate expression of a spirit" which has become impossible to-day, will become possible once again, and in a more all-embracing and more encompassing sense than ever before.* Then spirit will have become able to express itself through the medium of technically conquered nature, as originally as it did in the days of old Greek or Chinese culture.

In this direction lies the salvation from mechanisation and technicism, so far as such salvation is required. There is no other salvation possible nor even conceivable. He who wishes for culture in the consecrated sense can henceforward aspire to such only on the above described higher plane of nature. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly possible to build up a new culture on these new foundations, for this pre-supposes only that the achievements of technique have really become obvious to the mind, and a matter of course to the impulses and instincts. In this short article I could not do more than just state the problem.

Those who want to know from me in what definite terms it must be formulated, in the East on the one hand, and on the other in the West, and to what new forms of life its solutions

must lead in both cases, should read my "Travel Diary of a Philosopher" which is now available in an excellent English translation ;* if they know German they should also read my book "Schoepferische Erkenntnis"†. Unless I am very much mistaken there is a danger that many of the best minds of the East should misjudge the situation and work for the regeneration of mankind on a plane of existence which the process of history has left behind everywhere and for evermore.

There is no European alive who admires the ancient wisdom of the East more than I do. My School of Wisdom at Darmstadt is again and again being attacked for the very reason that I am supposed to transplant Indian recognitions into the West. But as I know life as it is to-day all over the world, I feel absolutely certain that even the Truth of old India must incarnate in a new body, corresponding to present-day conditions, in order to live again. Idealism is a very wonderful thing, but without common sense it never leads to perfection. And the first thing that common sense demands in all cases is to take and face given conditions as they really are.

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†Published by Otto Reichl, Darmstadt.

EDITOR'S NOTE.

We would remind Count Keyserling of the warning of Mr. A. J. Penty :

Of course this system (*of the unrestricted use of machinery and mechanical methods*) cannot last. Its own activities are generating toxins which are poisoning it. For while, on the one hand, it is giving rise to wholesale incompetence (*of individuals*), on the other, by destroying all charm in work and turning it into hated toil, it has roused a spirit of class hatred that expresses itself in revolt. Finally it uses up natural resources at such a ruinous rate that, apart from any other consideration, the limit of exhaustion must soon be reached.

And the message of M. Romain Rolland :

We know the material ties that weigh on twentieth century Europe, the crushing determination of economic conditions that hem it in; we know that centuries of passions and systematised error have built a crust about it which the light cannot pierce. But we also know what miracles the spirit can work.

Both published in the Editorial Article of our last July number.

Neither of these thinkers belong to the East.

THE OPPOSITES: IDEALISM AND PRAGMATISM.

Every man, who does anything in the world, works by the force given to him by ideals,—whether his own or others'—which he may or may not recognise, but in whose absence, nevertheless, he would be impotent. The smaller the ideals, the fewer, the less recognised, the less is the work done, the progress achieved ; on the other hand, when ideals enlarge themselves, when they become forceful, widely recognised, when different ideals enter the field, clash and communicate force to each other, then the race rises to its great periods of activity and creation.

Wherever and whenever the mere practical man abounds and discourages by his domination the idealist, in that age or country is the least valuable work done for humanity. On the other hand when the idealist is liberated, when the visionary abounds, then the executive worker, also uplifted, finds at once both orientation and energy, and accomplishes things which he would otherwise have rejected as a dream or a chimera.

Often enough, even when these two different types of men work in the same cause, and one more or less fulfils the other, they distrust, dislike and repudiate each other. To the practical worker, limiting himself by patent forces and actual possibilities, the idealist who made his work possible seems an idle dreamer or a trouble come fanatic ; to the idealist, the practical man, even while he is realising the first steps towards the ideal, seems a coarse spoiler of the divine work, almost an enemy.

And times there are, ages of stupendous effort and initiative, when the gods seem no longer satisfied with this tardy and fragmentary working, when the ideal constantly breaks through the material walls of the practical life. Innumerable ideas meet and wrestle in the arena of the world, and through the storm and flash, the possibility of the victoriously fulfilled ideal, the hope of the Messiah, the expectation of the Avatar, takes possession of the hearts and thoughts of men.

Such an age seems now to be coming upon the world.

—**Aurobindo.**

THE UNIVERSAL QUEST

By Prof. S. Hanmanthrao.

The object of this paper is not to carry on any philosophical discussion. It only makes an humble endeavour to find out the common features of the religions of the world. It aims to emphasise the idea of the Common Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, to show that an examination of the conditions of the past will lead us to the conclusion that, through all the numerous vicissitudes of human history, man has been aiming at Truth, to attain the infinite Treasure which when reached, all else appears fleeting and transitory.

The Egyptian worship is described as Nature Worship. The sun was worshipped as a God. The Nile was worshipped as a God. The Vedic Aryans who came to India and expressed some of the earliest thoughts of mankind also worshipped the forces of Nature that surrounded them. The Ganges became a goddess. The sun was a God. There was, however, already an indication that this worship of Nature, might degenerate into the worship of a number of Gods. The Vedic seers felt the necessity of emphasising the unity that underlay this diversity. They pointed out that the forces of Nature were only manfestations of the one source of All-Energy.

That which exists is one ; sages call it variously as Agni, Yama, Mátirisvá.

The daily midday prayer prescribed for every *dwija* or twice-born runs thus :

He is the sun dwelling in the bright Heaven, He is the air dwelling in the sky, He is the fire dwelling in the sacrificial hearth, He is the guest approaching the house, He dwells in men, in Gods, in the sacrifice and in heaven. Substances emanating from water, from earth, from sacrifice, from mountains,—all these are the true (God).

In course of time, however, these fundamental truths came to be forgotten. Greater emphasis came to be laid on form and

ritual. Magic practices, elaborate spells, incantations and animal sacrifies, became the order of the day. To some extent, the change was due to the contact with the non-Aryan races in India. In this wilderness of ritual and formalism, the fundamental principles of the unity of God-head were being lost sight of. Such a condition of things did not satisfy the quest of Man. He began to feel that reality did not consist in the formal worship of the day. He felt that he was groping in darkness. He felt no joy in what he saw. Everywhere there was doubt and a spirit of questioning. Hence arose the cry of the Upanishad seers :

Lead me from the unreal to the real, Lead me from darkness to light, Lead me from death to Immortality.

There was a craving to know the real nature of God. Is he something objective, outside yourself? Is he to be found only in the sacrificial hearth? Is religion a thing that can be put on whenever you like and dispensed with whenever it is not wanted? No. The Upanishad seers came to realise that the whole world is enveloped by Him :

He sees you though you cannot see Him. Your senses function only on account of His energy. He is the Ear of the ear, Mind of the mind, Speech of speech, Life of life, Eye of the eye.

Here is the greatest step taken in the development of human thought. The God we seek is not a despot whose throne it is very difficult to approach, but is a God who is as much within you as without you. There is a divine spark within us and it is our duty to eliminate the brute within and suffuse ourselves with the divine spirit. The Upanishads embody the highest ethical code when they ask us not to lead a life of passivity, but a life full of action.

By performing works do you live a hundred years.

Action by itself is not bad. It is only attachment to worldly pleasures and pains that causes misery. Hence perform works, but without attachment. Unselfish devotion to the world becomes the highest duty of man. The highest social good is

more important than individual welfare. When the individual realises that his welfare is others' welfare and others' welfare is his own, he approaches the goal. He comes nearest to God.

The Upanishads, thus, point out unity in diversity. But it is the irony of History that even at times when Humanity seems to be very near the "Promised Land", it tends to go far from it. So, a few centuries after the age of the Upanishads, we again witness doubt and questioning.

Just as the great thinkers of the modern world are convinced that no world-reconstruction is possible at the present moment, unless it is based on solid moral foundations, so also was the same conviction felt by the thinkers of that time, and the one leader —who for all ages, has won the reverence of all Hindu India— was Sri Krishna. He combined in his personality the characteristics of a great warrior and statesman, poet and philosopher, politician and saint. He was the singer of that Divine Song,— the song of harmony and peace, the song of universal prayer and faith. Here is no prescribed ritual, here is no special read to salvation, but *however man approach Him even so does He welcome them, for the path men take from every side is His.* It is only ignorance that fails to see the unity in this diversity.

Once again, in language much simpler than that of the Upanishads, an attempt is made to solve the Universal Quest. Once more, it is declared that human welfare does not depend upon any bribe offered to the priest, but on right conduct. No intellectual somersault can enable you to realise the All-soul. Humility, unpretentiouness, harmlessness, forgiveness, rectitude, purity, self-control, unattachment, absence of egoism,— these are the ways of the seeker.

Do we find any difference between these teachings of the leader of Hinduism and the Eight-fold path of the Great Buddha, —Right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right mode of livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right rapture? Is it right to call Buddha a denouncer of Activity when we find him saying: *It is true that I preach extinction but*

only the extinction of pride, lust, evil thoughts and ignorance, not that of forgiveness, love, charity and truth? Is it not the same ideal of right conduct that is embodied in the doctrine of the Jains, that the five duties of a Jain are ahimsa, charity, honesty, chastity and renunciation of worldly interest? Is not the same idea expressed by England's poet :

He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast
He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small.

While human thought was undergoing this development in India, it was equally active in those regions where the great civilisations of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Chaldea and Persia held their sway. There also religion began with nature worship and degenerated into formalism, and ritual. About 2,000 B. C. there appeared a great king in Egypt, Ikhnaten by name, who endeavoured to establish the faith in one God and made it the religion of his Empire. It will be an interesting study to find out what was the exact connection that existed between Ancient India and the contemporary oriental civilisations.

Several centuries later there appeared the great prophet of Persia who in the words of Tagore "was the greatest of all the pioneer prophets, who showed the path of freedom to men, the freedom of moral choice, the freedom from blind obedience to unmeaning injunctions, freedom from the multiplicity of shrines which draw our worship away from the single-minded chastity of devotion." He was one of those who appealed to the God-sense in man :

When I conceived of Thee, O Mazda, as the very first and the last, as the most adorable one, as the father of good thought as the creator of Truth and Right, as the Lord Judge of our actions in life, then I made a place for Thee in my very eyes.

Is not this a repetition of the thought of the Upanishad :

This deity who is manifesting himself in the activities of the universe always dwells in the heart of man as the supreme soul. Those who realise His through the immediate perception of the heart attain Immortality.

Three thousand years of human history are completed before we hear anything of western civilisation. All memories of that period are lost except in India and China. Throughout this period we observe the same tendency in the development of Religion. It begins with nature worship and tribal gods, but ends in the realisation of the All-in-one.

We now pass on to the pioneers of west-European civilisation—the Greeks and the Romans. We are still dazzled by the so-called classical learning. The study of their city-state still forms the beginning of all political education. As the Hindus invoke Ganesa before they commence any good action, we moderns invoke Aristotle, before we commence the study of Politics or Economics, Poetry or Ethics. We are told that while man hitherto merely aimed at life, the city-state enabled him to lead a good life. We are told, that it is like the dawn of responsibility in a youth, who suddenly discovers that life is neither easy nor aimless, and that mankind is growing up.

May we not, with greater truth, affirm that this discovery that life is neither easy nor aimless was made at least 2,000 years before Aristotle, when the Upanishad sages declared that the highest aim of man's life is to know his *self*?

No one can deny the fact that Greece elevated spiritual life by giving the greatest scope to freedom of thought. It soon passed over the stage of tribal gods and came to understand the meaning of a moral life. In Asia, Socrates and Epictetus would have become Gods. We find the same belief in single Infinite power, the same doctrine of detachment from the things of the Earth, the same advice to live a life full of action, in the teachings of Socrates and Epictetus, as we find in the Upanishads and the Gita. When Epictetus asks you to take all things contentedly, is he not approaching tht *Mahátmá* of the Upanishads; the great man, who is *prasánta* peaceful, *yuktátmanah* at one with God and *nirdvandva* free from opposites? If you always remember that God stands by, an inspector of whatever you do, either in soul or in body, you will never err either in your prayers or actions and you will have God abiding with you. It was Sri Krishna who expressed this same idea in the Song Celestial:

Surrender all actions to me, with thy thoughts resting on the supreme self, from hope and egoism freed and of mental fever cured, engage in battle.

The city-state embodied the highest intellectual development of the time, but it reached only a small portion of all humanity. Alexander attempted to hellenise the then known world. There was for a time the prospect of the East and West coming together. But the prospect soon vanished. However, the idea of Alexander remained as a powerful tradition. Rome with its wonderful development from a tiny little city into the greatest Empire of the times reminds one of the wonderful growth of the little tiny Anglo-Saxon state into the British Empire of the present day. The moral and social structure was all the time shaking underneath. The Roman institutions were best suited to a Republic. They were not adjusted to suit the needs of an Empire. With the rise of Marius and Sulla, the best days of the Republic were over, and military power came to predominate over the civil. The great philosopher-emperor, Marcus Aurelius, is only an exception in that long line of emperors that represented the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

It was a period of inequality, a period of general misery and vice. There was a general feeling of disgust,—even a spirit of doubt in the existence of God,—If there is really a God, why is he so silent! The cry was heard and one of the greatest figures of History appeared in the person of Jesus. He came with a gospel, not for the few, but for all. He came to announce that the Lord is not the Lord of the rich or the mighty, but the Lord of the meek and the lowly. Can there be a nobler personification of the Upanishad ideal : *Enjoy by giving away, covet not,*—than that figure of Jesus at the crucifixion?

In a few centuries, it became the official religion of the Roman Empire and no one will deny the softening and purifying tendencies of the early Christian doctrine in western Europe. But, at the same time, like Hinduism of long ago, Christianity also was subjected to a process of deterioration. Dogma and

ritual became more important than Truth, and the coming of a new prophet became necessary.

Muhammad created the new awakening: *that God is not merely the God of to-day or tomorrow, carved out of wood or stone, but the mighty, loving, merciful Creator of the world.* When the popular beliefs of Christianity overshadowed the truth that was proclaimed by Jesus, Muhammad once more emphasised the underlying unity of all the diversity that is manifested in the Universe. He says in the Koran:

It is He who causeth the lightning to appear unto you to strike fear and to raise hope and formeth the pregnant clouds. The thunder celebrateth His praise and the angels also. He launcheth his thunderbolts and striketh therewith whom He pleaseth while they dispute concerning Him. . . . It is He who of right ought to be invoked and those whom they invoke besides Him shall not respond to them at all. . . Sight perceives Him not, but He perceives men's sights: for He is the All-penetrating: the Aware.

This is the same idea as was expressed by the Upanishad sages when they said:

From fear of Him fire burns, from fear of Him the sun shines, from fear of Him the wind blows and from fear of Him death is rampant.

He who cannot be seen by the eyes but who causes the eye to perceive all visible objects, know Him alone as God, Him who stands so near.

Do we not find in the teachings of the Koran, the same monotheistic spirit that is exhibited in the Upanishads, the same importance attached to *sraddhá* or faith and prayer, the same insistence upon right conduct and right action that you find in the Gîtá?

The conquests of Islam during the centuries following Mahammad form one of the most amazing spectacles in history. They are no doubt the result of physical power, but also of the strong religious force behind it. The religion of Islam produced a greater moral effect than that of the then decadent Christianity. The Christian priesthood lost its moral force when its priests became leaders of armies. Is Christianity justified in the charge

of militarism brought against Islam, when the Popes fought against Emperors and created human hate instead of Christian love?

The medieval popes parted from the early injunctions of the Saint of Galilee : *My kingdom is not of this world,*—and began to interfere in temporal matters as intermediaries between God and Emperor. The jealousies and quarrels between the rival popes, the flagrant immorality that existed in the church, the total neglect of their duties to their flock reminds us of the condition of the Hindu popes at the present day. A reaction came, there was a spirit of freedom and true inquiry, a craving for righteousness, and we have the Renaissance and the Reformation. But instead of inaugurating an era of peace and Christian brotherhood, there was more bitterness and war.

Medieval Emperors were so dazzied with the traditions of Alexander, Caesar and Augustus, that they did not try to evolve the principle of group-consciousness and group-mind that was underlying the feudal scheme of medieval polity. The chance of harmony, peace and brotherhood, that was lost once when Alexander died a premature death, was lost for a second time when the medieval system of polity and religion failed, giving place to national states and national religions. The moral foundations of the state were gone and the principle "where the safety of one's country is at stake there must be no consideration of what is just or unjust, merciful or cruel, glorious or shameful : on the contrary everything must be disregarded save that course which will save her life and maintain her independence" became the Bible of the nation-states. How far away is this conception from that of Aristotle, that the end of the state is the development of the moral and intellectual life of the community, and the view of the early Fathers that the end of the state is primarily to smooth men's way to salvation.

I do not under-rate the Humanitarian movements of the eighteenth century; the teachings of Voltaire, Rousseau and the other French thinkers who succeeded in raising the value of the Individual in the state; or the efforts of poets, novelists and philosophers thoughout western Europe in rousing the dormant

soul in man. But during the last century and half, there has been a counter current,—the false ideal of Nationalism.

Just as religion, which ought to unite people, also divided peoples, the movement of Nationalism which started as a movement of unity led to divisions among groups. What harm to Universal Brotherhood this doctrine of rampant nationalism was capable of doing, no nation seriously considered, until the disastrous catastrophe known as the World War broke out. Religion was declared out of court in politics. The Biblical commandment : *Love thy neighbour* was left aside as only good enough amongst individuals within a country. It ceased to have application between two different countries. The machiavellian doctrine came into force, that whatever is done for the greatness of your own nation is in itself the highest morality.

That has been the trend of History in Western Europe during the last thirteen centuries. What was the course of events in the East?

Islam, ultimately driven from Europe made its permanent home in the East. It exercised a great influence on India. It seems correct to say that, at least from the 14th century onwards, Hindu thought came to be consciously affected by the teaching of Islam. The belief in one All-merciful, All-loving God who can be realised not by any intellectual process but by faith and prayer, is evident in all the religious ferment that was taking place in the various parts of India during this period. The doctrine of Divine Love, *bhakti*, or devotion is the chief feature of the Hinduism of the period. As in Sufism, here is no ritual, no formalism, no medium between the worshipped and the worshipper. It is the universal path of communion between the finite soul and the Infinite Soul. It consists in complete self-forgetfulness. There is no longer the feeling of I and Mine. The individual feels *he is not the doer, but God is the doer.*

There was no period in Indian History after Asoka more favourable for this outburst of the religion of the heart—the religion of Love—than that of Akbar. It was the period when Christian missionaries for the first time dared to preach their doctrines in this country. It was also the period when in various parts of the country, vernacular religious literature began to

develop. It was the period when a knowledge of Hindu philosophy became possible to the Muhammadans through Persian translations of the Upanishads and the Epics. It was also the period when the mysticism of the Sufi saints must have influenced the devotional side of Hinduism.

Akbar, by taking an active part in this evolution of a new religion based on the underlying principles of all the religions of the time, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastianism, Christianity and Islam was attempting a revolution which had no precedent in the history of the world. He was attempting to revive the true Upanishad spirit implied in the words :

That word which all Vedas record, which all penances proclaim, which men desire when they live as religious students, that word I tell thee briefly. It is **Om**. *It means* **all this.**

What Akbar tried to establish by his example and precept, Kabir the poet-philosopher infused into the popular mind :

O servant! where dost thou seek me?
Lo I am beside Thee!
I am neither in temple, nor in mosque,
I am neither in Kaaba, nor in Kailash ;
If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see me,
Thou shalt meet me in a moment of time.
Kabir says: "O sadhu! God is the breath of all breath."

Here was the man who realised that he is at once the child of Allah and Rám. Is not the same idea stated in the Koran : *Wheresoever ye turn, there is the face of Allah,* and also by the poet saint Ibn ul Arabi :

My heart has become capable of every form
It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for christian monks
And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's kaaba
And the table of the Tera and the book of the Koran.
I follow the religion of Love, whichever way his camels take
My religion and my faith is the true religion.

And by Jalaluddin Roumi :

If there be any lover in the world, O Moslems 'tis I
This earth and heaven with all that they hold
Angels, peris, genii and mankind, 'tis I

There would have been probably no Hindu-Moslem trouble in India had Dara Shikoh succeeded to the throne of Delhi, instead of Aurangzeb. Hindu India has yet to learn what a great mystic Dara Shikoh was. He realised the truth that Elaha Allalla and Ekamevádwitîyam are one and the same. He realised the Koranic truth :

He is within your very souls but ye see Him not.

He was one of those who succeeded in obtaining solitude in the midst of crowds, retirement in the thick of bustle and wordly noise. He realised that worldliness does not consist in dress, money, sons and wife but in the non-remembering of God. It was nothing but an irony of history that Dara did not succeed to the Delhi throne.

The period of Aurangzeb and his successors, followed by the rise and growth of British dominion in India, is a matter of recent history. A policy of religious neutrality has been followed, more or less, by the British in India. It is too early to arrive at a true estimate of its effeits. But it can be said without doubt that they made the modern reforming movements possible. Without their moral support, leaders of reform like Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Veerasalingam would have found no scope. But how far have we proceeded towards Universal Brotherhood? Has the Brahmin given up his intellectual pride and realised that the God in Heaven is the God of the meek and lowly and not of the calculating and the cunning? Has the follower of Islam realised that Ram and Rahim are different names of the same source of All-Intelligence and All-Love?

At the begining of the 20th century, the whole world was shocked at the destruction of all that was best in European art and European Literature, and all the greatest minds of western Europe were compelled to make the sorry confession that Christianity has failed to produce that principle of universal love, which is the same between individuals as well as nations. The eighteenth and nineteenth century political thought justifies the authority of the state only when it represents the totality of the wills of the individuals and the groups within it. Is it not the

highest achievement of human endeavour to enlarge the boundaries of such a state to the boundaries of the world?

Why have all previous attempts failed? Alexander, Caesar, Constantine, Napoleon, Kaiser William,—none have succeeded because they began at the top and not at the bottom. They came as conquerers trying to establish unity by force and not by good will. Is it not the existence of this spirit of Force among the Big Allies that has postponed Peace?

The atmosphere is not yet clear. There is still a feeling that a common organisation only means subjection to different authority. Is it not possible to get rid of this feeling in the International sphere, as it was got rid of in the national sphere? It will never be possible so long as by unity we mean the establishment of a superior "culture" at the point of the sword. It will not be possible while the Christian missionary believes and preaches that universal welfare depends upon conversion to his own religion. It will also not be possible if the two great communities of this country,—Hindu and Moslem,—believe in the existence of a fundamental barrier between themselves.

What then is the proper solution? The evolution of a common Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man, not by fight, not by conquest, but my the absorption of all that is good everywhere in every race and in every state.

The ideal of forcing all states into a single Empire or partitioning them among two or three Big Empires has not succeeded in History. But is the new experiment of a League of Nations, based on the principle of self-determination, going to be a success, or is it going to be a huge delusion leading to a greater war, where more science, more wealth and more ingenuity is going to to be used for destruction? The answer depends upon the new meaning that is to be given to Human Endeavour; whether it should consist in love, suffering and sacrifice, or might, victory and conquest.

The East is helping the West in the solution of this problem in the same way in which Jesus did two thousand years ago. No two figures have excited the admiration of the world, since Christ and Buddha, as Gandhi and Tagore. The West believed in

progress based on material strength and prosperity. The East is now teaching the West to believe in the strength of sacrifice, suffering and love.

East and West are now linked together in a manner in which they were never linked before. May we not expect in these portents a true "Federation of the World" based not on brute strength, but on moral force? Can we not expect that a greater step will be taken than at any previous stage in Human History for the realisation of the truth expressed in the words of the poet :

Father of all in every age
In every clime adored
By saint, by savage and by sage
Jehovah, Jove or Lord,

* *

To thee whose temple is all space
Whose altar, earth sea and skies
One chorus let all beings raise
All nature's incense rise.

CIVILISATION AND ETHICS

*A Review**

By S. E. Stokes, *Kotgarh.*

I have been carefully through Schweitzer, and with the deepest interest. The first volume seems to me of particular value. Doubtless, this is because it expresses what I have been feeling for a number of years with the greatest possible intensity. Humanity has got out of touch with life as a whole; it has not seen and understood life in its entirety. Therefore, it has been attempting to subsist upon scraps and fragments. The tendency to specialisation has made those, who have devoted themselves to knowledge, content with details. I have been more and more impressed with the fact, that we can only make the most of life and the most of ourselves, if we have a definite conception of its significance.

Of course the limitations of human nature, make it impossible that we should apprehend the complete significance of the Self and Self-experience; but what comes within the content of experience and is expressed to the Self in the terms of human nature, should be capable of right apprehension, though its ultimate implications are at many points necessarily hidden. We should be able to grasp enough to be able to read life as a page in the book of eternity —not as a jumble of disjointed and apparently disconnected fragments of sentences. It seems to me, that it is just because we have lost that view of the oneness of life,—of the vital and essential unity of it,—and of its significance when apprehended as the timeless experienced in time and the inseparable experienced in individuality, that we wander so aimlessly and bring no fruit to perfection.

It has been this thought, which has practically impelled me to go into the silence and cut myself off from the excitement of those issues, which, when I devote attention to them, force to

*Philosophy of Civilisation by *Albrecht Schweitzer.*

action. I cannot tell you with what imperativeness the feeling has taken possession of me, that all effort will attain to its true value only when humanity again regrasps its conviction, that life is a unity and, as a unity, has a meaning and a *paramártha*. How can we—how can our race—advance, or indeed even hold its ground, if it is governed by vague sentiment and has lost faith in the timeless significance of the Self and the world of its experience? Surely Christ would have felt compassion for the men of this generation.

Such thoughts as these made me greatly appreciate the first volume of Schweitzer's *Philosophy of Civilisation*. In it he has expressed thoughts which are very real to me .His conviction, that without regaining a 'World-view' the civilisation of a race is bound to go to pieces, is a thought I have pondered over for years. All the time I was in jail was devoted to an attempt to find such a view; and the book I wrote there was entitled: *Thoughts on the Meaning of Life*. It is now so complete, that, though the form is not yet satisfactory to me, and I am working on that, still everything necessary is there, and if I should die to-morrow, it could be taken and put into shape by another.

However, to return to Schweitzer. I like his first volume immensely. The first part of the second volume also, in which he points out what he conceives to be the vital weaknesses of the various systems of western philosophic thought, is very suggestive. The latter part of the second volume, however, in which he developes his own method of approach to the problem of the meaning of things, did not seem to me to be of a nature that could carry us very far.

Of course, the feeling of reverence for and awe in the presence of life is an inspiring thought. I too have felt it and have felt impelled to the service even of the insects that he mentions. That I have felt it in another way and for different reasons than he, is quite natural; for I differ vitally from him in my conception of life's meaning. Still, I have that feeling of love and fellowship with all that is living, and am therefore perhaps not unfitted to appreciate the value of the attitude of mind that he advocates, as essential if civilisation is to survive.

There are various points where he does not satisfy me. We approach the problem differently. His view is a looking-outward; it seems to me that the meaning of the world—all experiencing—is to be found by looking inward. He seems to think of life as some thing which can be destroyed; it is a view that I cannot comprehend. His conceptions have to do with living men and living animals; to me it seems that we are dealing with the Self experiencing in terms of human and non-human nature. "We can only see" he says, "that all life eventually ceases to be"; my own experience is that as we enter deeper into the meaning of things, we apprehend that the prevailing conception of death is a misapprehension, based upon a misconception of the nature of life. Death is one of the illusions, and with it the fear of death.

Schweitzer's belief that life can be destroyed seems to me to lead him into an extraordinary position. In the ethic of 'reverence for life,' that he puts forward, "all destruction of and injury to life, from whatever circumstances they may result, are reckoned by it as an evil." He holds that, on one side is the ethical, and on the other the necessary; for he acknowledges that in the world it is impossible not to take life. We can none of us "cut ourselves off from the horrible necessity (of taking life) which plays ceaselessly round us". Yet necessary or not, it is evil. This really means that living in this world is of necessity opposed to the ethical, no matter how much we succeed in reducing the amount of life that we destroy; as a consequence, it is and must continue to be a compromise with evil. (pp. 263-5).

Holding this view, it is no wonder that he is convinced of "the impossiblity of the attempt to understand the meaning of life in the meaning of the world". The interests of the world are opposed to those of life; it is a form of dualism.

Turning to the position upon which he feels that he must build, we find it summed up in: "I am life which wills to live; and I exist in the midst of life which wills to live"; the ethical corollary of which is: "I experience the necessity of practising the same reverence toward all wills-to-live as toward my own."

This ethic is, of course, the golden rule with its implications extended to include non-human animals and plants. The

postulate seems to me to be neither self-evident, nor fundamental. I experience the will-to-live without doubt. This is a fact of experience. But is it the deepest note of my experiencing life? Is it the dynamic factor impelling to the most profound experience? Am I not conscious, as the world of the experiencing self broadens and deepens, that mere will-to-live, in the sense in which Schweitzer appears to use the term,—a livingness that can be destroyed by physical causes,—holds by no means a primary place? So far as such life is concerned, there have been many who had a will-to-die. That is why I can not feel it to be really fundamental. In the lowest organism, it probably amounts to little more than an instinct to avoid pain. In the experience of the only Self we know at first hand—*our own*—it is neither the most dynamic factor nor the most vital experience which it knows. There are others which would make the Self toss aside 'life'—this thing that can be destroyed—without a moment's consideration.

I accept his second article : 'I exist in the midst of life that wills to live', because I am certain that I have found a basis for believing it. Yet as he seems to view life, it is surely a mere assumption which is unjustifiable, unless based upon more ultimate considerations. He states as a fact, what is not at all self-evident. At least, I presume he holds it as such, for he would hardly make it the foundation upon which to build up his world-view otherwise.

I gather my impression that he does not base his assertion upon more fundamental considerations, because of his constantly repeated assertions, that the interests of 'life' and of 'nature' are antagonistic. Life in the world is a horrible puzzle, in which man must live as ethically as grim necessity permits. To destroy life is ethically wrong under all circumstances : "All destruction of and injury to life, from whatever circumstances they result, are reckoned by it as evil". No wonder that a world in which the maintenance of life (or rather of the physiological state of livingness) is absolutely dependent upon its constant destruction in detail, shocks him.

Schweitzer seems to me to do what Sankara has so often warned us against,—to identify the self with its accidents; and this is what I feel has landed him into his present philosophic position. To me it is a hopeless one, and I pity Europe and America, if they are so starved that it can afford them an inspiration.

I too have felt reverence for life, and sympathy for the sufferings of animal and insect experience, but it was not for the sake of the animal or the insect nature, but of the Self experiencing through them. My feeling has made me too, for years, do the kind of things Schweitzer suggests, but never for a moment because I imagined that I could take or save *life*.

* * *

THE MEANING OF DEATH.

With the close of all those earthly relations, which we call by the name of Death, the merely human clothing of the experience of the Self, comes to an end also. The temporarily-real expressions of a deeper reality, the temporary instruments of that real longing, stretching out to find its wholeness in what is personal, pass out of the world of the experiencing Self; but the reality of the relationship remains stripped of its hitherto familiar *nám* and *rûp*, waiting to be clothed in higher forms fitted to deeper and broader experiences. The true need, and the true desire begotten of it, are real. They belong to the personal Self. The human expression was temporarily-real,—not more.

As the Chandyoga Upanishat so beautifully says: "These are the true desires, with a covering of untruth. For, whoever departs from here, him one cannot see again in this world. Those of his, who are living and who are dead, and whatsoever else there is which, though desiring, one does not obtain,—all this one finds, when he goes There. There are all those true desires, covered by untruth".

It is surely a precious lesson, that Death teaches, showing us how and where we tend to confuse those true desires with the clothing that is only real in a very temporary sense.

NOTES

Some pages from the President's travel diary.

(translated.)

S. S. Haruno Maru,
24th September, 1924.

It is eight in the morning. Thick clouds in the sky overhead; the horizon hazy with rain; the damp wind, like a peevish child, never getting done with its fitful gusts. On the other side of the breakwater, the savage sea roars and leaps up, as if at some throat which it fails to reach. The sight of this rain-blurred frothing mass of speechlessness makes me think of some nightmare-ridden depth whose impotent emotions, stirred up by its bad dreams, rise crowding round its heart, its suffocated utterance finding vent in an agonised wail.

These signs of nasty weather, at the very start, make one's whole being wilt. Our intellect is modern and staunch; it refuses to acknowledge omens. But our blood is full of old time fears and anxieties which, like the waves beyond the enclosure, will not be quieted, and keep knocking against and leaping over our reasoned conclusions. The intellect has ensconsed itself behind barriers of reason, out of touch with the inarticulate voices of the Universe. The blood has remained outside; on it falls the shadow of the clouds and the surge of far away billows; the piping of the wind makes it dance and its moods respond to the play of light and shade,—so that when the elements are unkind it cannot help being disconsolate.

I have often made journeys to distant lands, my mind never experiencing any difficulty in casting off from its mooring. This time, however, its anchor seems to have gripped fast. This shows that I am growing old. The refusal to move on is nothing but a form of mental miserliness; one becomes reluctant to spend, only when one's hoard is felt to be diminishing. Yet I know that this feeling of being held back will go off as soon as we have

left the harbour well behind. Then the young adventurer in me will revel in the open road and feel all the old keeness to take a peep behind the veil of the fair Unknown beyond the seas.

On the last occasion, when my invitation came from China, they expected from me words of wisdom,—clearly an invitation of grown ups. But from South America they have invited me to take part in their Centenary Festival. This allows me to travel light, for I have not to put on grown-up airs. The more I have to lecture, the more does my own vapouring hide the real me, for that is not my poet's function. The butterfly leaves the chrysalis by virtue of its own quality of life; the silk thread leaves the cocoon by dint of diverse mechanical processes, and thereupon the fate of the hapless butterfly is tragic.

I first went over to the United States when I was past middle age and great was the efficiency with which they managed to extract all my words from me. Ever since then I have been in requisition in the markets of useful words, and my recognition as poet has taken a back place. Up to my fiftieth year I spent in unofficial haunts of uselessness. And now, when according to Manu I should have retreated into the forest, I have got entangled in the web of utility. Verily is Saturn ascendant in the sky of my fate.

25th September.

All yesterday our Steamer went on loading her cargo. When at length she cast off in the night, the wind had abated somewhat, but the clouds were still swaggering about in massed formation. This morning a dismal dampness continues to blot out the sky. For me there is to be no sunny send off this time. And both in mind and body I am tired.

Our ship sails off with a bit of the world cut out of the shore life. On land there is room enough to keep spaces between man and man. Here we are crowded into compactness. And yet how difficult it is to get to know one another. This feeling overcasts my mind every time I sail,—this distancing of the intimate, this uncompanionable propinquity!

The habitations of early man had thin walls, with their wattle framework full of interstices, their doors of mat easy to

push open. As the designing of dwellings gained in expertness, masonry, wood and iron were requisitioned to make them impervious. Outside influences were barred out : inside habits and customs were fastened in. This privacy, which is needed for sitting and eating and dressing and sleeping in comfort, appears to be an essential appendage of civilisation itself, which is costing no end of trouble and expense to attain and maintain, —this barrier at every step to the free intercourse between the inside and the outside.

I admit that individual man needs a natural protective armour, such as Karna of the Mahabharata was endowed with by the Sun. Otherwise, if he is pressed into becoming merely one of a crowd, his precious gift of individuality tends to become futile. Man cannot properly express himself unless he secludes himself, just as the seed, before it can sprout, seeks shelter beneath the soil, the fruit puts on its covering of skin to screen its ripening. The barbarian neither has nor needs the full strength of individuality : with the progress of man's civilisation, are evolved all the barriers of personal privacy.

The mischief is that these barriers gradually assume an undue self-importance of their own. Then, by reason of the increasing impediments which come to block the way, the prime necessity of intercourse between man and man gets out of sight altogether. This exaggeration of the impediments is the calamity.

In what circumstances does this calamity overtake humanity? When, with an inordinately high standard of comfort, man's necessities are excessively multiplied, then he needs must become specially circumspect and calculating where any expenditure of time or trouble is involved for the sake of others. When he requires the production of endless material for his own living, the towns and cities which house the steeds of his desires grow to gigantic proportions. But it is only when the congregations of men are of reasonable dimensions that intimacy of relation is possible between individuals. And so village dwellers are not only closely related, but they form a unit. Vast cities have not been able to develop a heart centre strong enough to circulate the current of their life through all their numerous and complex

ramifications. Overgrown organisations are therefore only efficient in their output of work, not of human relations. The factory can do with thousands of workers, but the homeliness of home is lost if it is overcrowded. And so cities, while holding together their citizens with outward bonds, loosen all the while their inward ties.

We who have been brought up from childhood amidst the endless compartments of this civilisation, with their closed doors, and have lost the habit of intimacy, are now thrown close together within the confines of this ship. For those who tread the open road, on a common pilgrimage, it takes no time to come together, for they are villagers who are used to mingling with their fellows. But the passengers of steamships and railway trains, when they leave their city home, take the astral bodies of their walls along with them. Thus we find, when our college students, fired with a sudden urge of patriotism, rush off to do good to the villagers, they can but go up to them, but fail to get near. They talk through their accustomed bars, and their voice sounds as Greek to these simple folk.

But there is another side. Vigorously as the whirlpool of this civilisation draws us in, it has not taken off all our rusticity. We have learnt to talk of the value of time, but if someone else chooses to ignore that value, we have not the wherewithal to hold him at bay. One day I had retired to my room upstairs, feeling far from well and with work to do. Being of a naturally mild disposition, even this private room of mine is not inaccessible to my friends as well as to those who are otherwise. Fortunately the way to it is not known to all good citizens of this city. So word was sent up that a visitor was waiting to see me downstairs. I knew that being busy or unwell is no excuse in our country, so with a sigh I stopped my writing and stepped down.

I found an unknown youth, lying in wait for me, who lost no time in producing from within the folds of his shawl a thick looking MS. book. I understood I had to do with a fellow craftsman. "I have composed an opera," the young poet informed me. He must have noticed the pallor spreading over my countenance for he hastened to add: "I ask nothing much of you,—just to set tunes to the words of my songs, which are only

twenty-five." "Where's the time"? was all I could falter in reply. He assured me that it would not take much time as he reckoned half-an-hour for each song. "But I am not well," I then gasped in desperation, whereupon he still persisted, saying : "Oh, if you say that I—but—" It is thrilling to think of the denouement on which the curtain would have been rung down if the stage of this drama had been an English author's sanctum!

So, as I was saying, the closed door is a cruel fact of civilisation, but the absence of all privacy is sheer barbarism. Creation consists in the reconciliation of opposites : in their utter separation is chaos. Man forgets this and so gets punished over and over again.

27th September.

The clouds have altogether passed off to-day. A benign dispensation of light overspreads the sky; there is cordial invitation in everyone of the sun-lit ripples of the sea. I would fain not miss the least bit of this hospitality of the heavens, and am loath to spare any part of such a day for writing my diary.

Diary writing is miser's work,—the result of a desire not to waste anything, but to gather and hoard everyone of the day's happenings, big or small. The miser, as I said, does not move on, but remains brooding.

My creator has given me one great gift,—an inordinate faculty of forgetting. He has not put me in charge of his storeroom of facts; nor am I on duty as watchman,—it being my privilege, through the watches, to keep on dropping from my mind the burden of each passing period.

But, had such dropping out meant losing, my Master would never have made such a mistake. The Spring forgets everytime its circumstance of blossoming and hies distraught and empty-handed towards the bleakness of its end; but it is through this forgetfulness that the flowers find open the gateway to their new birth. My every-day life becomes difficult with the number of things which my uppermost mind forgets. But these things my surface-memory thus lets drop, only for them to be gathered in the green-room of the depth below, where they can find the means for ever-new changes of dress.

God has evidently fashioned my mind as a stage for drama, not a museum of events. And so the attempt to hoard is always a loss for me,—I gain by what I let go. When, through this process of passing out, something that was apparently lost is regained in another guise, it becomes difficult for me to stand cross-examination by any scientist of tenacious memory, for his keen analysis may make it appear that what I call new is but the old, that which I now call mine was some one else's. But this is just the playfulness of Creation itself,—that is why it is called *Máya*. If a stern sentry should insist on going through the pockets of the dewdrop, only two curious gases would be found, with tempers as fiery as their names are harsh. And yet the dewdrop remains wholesomely cool as ever, sweet as any teardrop shed by two mingling souls.

But the more one talks the more there is left to say. What I started to make out was that Diary writing is not in my line. I am a follower of Shiva, the absent-minded, and am not out to fill my beggar's bowl with gathered facts. If I absently allow any portion of the lake of my mind to evaporate, that ascends through invisible ways to gather as cloud in my sky,—else all my showering is at an end.

Besides, I am reluctant to measure all the truths of my individual life by one and the same authoritative standard. And yet it takes time to evolve special standards suited to special happenings, so that when an event does happen its true measure may not be available. Then what may seem big according to the recognised standard may really be small, and what we are led to think light may in truth be the weighty thing. It is only by a prolonged process of forgetting accidentals that we may attain the means of correctly appraising particular merit.

The excessively credible facts gathered from contemporaneous documents, on which writers of biographies base their work, are but rigid pieces of news which can neither be enlarged nor reduced. But Life itself progresses by a series of expansions and contractions of its daily events. A pile of those facts of extreme credibility may serve for building a memorial monument, but how can they make up the story of a life? If from Life's story the forgetfulness with which all life is instinct be

left out, of what good to us can be the deadness of the result? Had I been foolish enough to write a diary for each and every day, then would such false witness, borne under my own hand, have contradicted and mutilated the truth of my own life.

In the age when there were no reporters, newspapers not having been invented, man's natural faculty of forgetfulness met with no artificial check. That is how those times produced men of never-to-be-forgotten greatness. Now-a-days, we may gain any number of everyday great men at the hands of our keen-sighted, fact-pecking critics, but no more so easily such men of all time.

I have the fear that some day some future biographer, armed with a camera, may attempt to photograph that garden of our childhood's days, where Mother Nature every morning would smile up at me as she put right in my gladdened heart, decked out on her tray of blue, each day's sunrise as her special present. That matter-of-fact biographer would not even know that this garden of mine is only to be found there, where is the Garden of Eden in Paradise. The Artist who is sceptical about extra-credibly recorded facts may perchance find his way into that heaven, but never any camera-man; for is not its entrance guarded by the angel with a flaming sword?

28th September.

As we reached Colombo, every quarter of the sky was flooded with rain. When the home is desolate with the tears of some great sorrow, some profound loss, the guest ceases to have freedom of entry. The hospitality of Colombo's heavy-laden sky was thuswise constricted for me, lacking the warmth of welcome in which my mind could spread itself out. I kept wondering what evil star should have made so cold this first touch of the outside world whose invitation had brought me out. What if the door was open, where was the smile of greeting on the face of my host?

It was in the midst of this desponding day with its averted face that a letter from a Bengali maiden was handed to me. This was the same little maid who had asked me for a poem describing my sojourn at Shillong,—a request I had not been able

to bring myself to dishonour. Now she simply wished me *bon voyage*. This gave me heart, for I felt that the good wishes of this maid of Bengal would surely counteract the evil omen of the unpropitious elements.

Man has his bravery, woman her charm,—this is acknowledged in every country. To this we in India add, that Woman represents the Good. All those portions of our social ceremonies which betoken auspiciousness are in her charge. When setting out on any adventure we value the blessing of the mother more than that of the father, for we feel that, like perfume from the censor, the woman's prayer rises daily to heaven,—in the vermillion spot worn by the wife at the parting of her hair as a charm to fend her husband from all harm; in the sandal paste with which the sister decks her brother's forehead once a year to mark her ever-green remembrance of the joys and sorrows of her childhood's home; in her *ulu*-cry of rejoicing, her conch-blast of festivity; in the meaning of each one of her everyday ornaments; in her thousand and one expressed and suppressed anxieties. The love of woman not only makes us glad, but we feel therein our truest welfare.

This means that somehow we of India have come to the understanding that the thing called Love is not merely an affair of the heart, but a force as universal as that of gravitation. It is this Universal Force which the love of woman sets free. The power of love, inherent in Vishnu, wherewith He nurtures the Universe, is his beloved Lakshmi herself. The ideal of ours, which is embodied in Lakshmi, we find realised in our typical woman. The beauty which we behold in Lakshmi is that of perfect harmony: so long as in Creation the opposites are not reconciled, Beauty does not come into being.

This reconciliation man, in the pursuit of his path of work, has not yet arrived at,—perhaps will never attain. He is so busy making inroads into the unknown, that he cannot find the leisure to cry halt at any stage of fulfilment. The Creator has not put the last stroke of His brush in the making of man's character, so that man needs must be content with incompleteness.

But the being of woman is established in her own nature and she does not perilously have to venture forth to seek its fulfilment.

Some objective of animate nature has found in her its perfection. About her special functions Nature has no hesitations. Various is the wealth of creation, of nourishment, of joy, with which her body and mind are endowed.

In the creation of the body the function of man is but slight, so that he is gifted from birth with freedom from one great responsibility. And thus has he been enabled to take on himself the function of creation in the world of the mind. In the fields of literature and art, science and philosophy, morals and religion, this life-long truant from the workshop of physical life has thus been busy creating what we call civilisation. Whenever any obstacle arises in the way of the fertilising flow of the richly varied life-stream of woman's creation into the endeavour of man, mechanical degeneration overtakes his creations, and the resulting machines become instruments of torment for others as well as for himself.

This is the idea which has sought expression in my *Red Oleanders*. All the energy of the men of Yaksha Town is constantly engaged in the extraction of golden treasure from the depth of the earth, and the cruel greed of such constant endeavour has banished Beauty from their midst. There, in Yaksha Town, man cut himself off from the All, entangled in the complex network of his own contriving; forgetting that joy is of greater worth than gold; that fulfilment is not attainable through might, but only through love. Thereupon, by dint of his stupendous efforts for the enslavement of his fellow-men, Man kept himself enchained.

Meanwhile enters Nandini, the Woman. The impact of Life comes upon the Machine. The all-daring importunity of love attacks the network of bondage set up by struggling greed. How, at the insidious onslaught of this force of woman's love, man came to break the door of this prison of his own building, in a supreme attempt to liberate the stream of Life, is described in that play.

THE GOD OF LOVE.

What is the ideal of the lover who has passed beyond the habit of bartering and bargaining and who knows no fear? Even to the great God such a man will say: "I have given you my all, and I do not want anything from you; indeed, there is nothing I can call my own." This grand ideal of the Religion of Love demands the worship of love absolutely as such, without the aid of any symbols or suggestions.

All the other forms of *Bhakti* are only stages on the way to reach this. Object after object is taken up, and his inner ideal successively projected on them by the *bhakta*, to find that all external objects are always inadequate as exponents of his ever-expanding inner ideal, and are thereupon cast aside by him, one after another.

And in course of time, the devotee acquires the power of realising the highest and the most generalised ideal, which to him, however, becomes quite alive and real. When he has reached this point, he is no longer impelled to ask whether God is omnipotent or omniscient, or not. To him, He is only the God of Love.

It is said by some that selfishness is the only motive power in regard to all human activities. In my opinion that also is love, lowered by being particularised. When I think of myself as a part of the universal Whole and love It, my love becomes universal also. But when I, by mistake, think that I am a little something, disconnected from the Whole, my love becomes particularised and narrowed.

This universal Whole is the God of the *bhaktas*, and all the other gods, books, doctrines, theories, have no purpose, no meaning for them; for, through their supreme love, they have risen above these things altogether. When the heart is cleansed and filled to the brim with the divine nectar of love, all other ideas of God except that He is Love become puerile and are rejected as inadequate or unworthy.

—Vivekánanda.

VISVA-BHARATI BULLETIN

I

From the Address by Dr. Sten Konow at the Varshika Parishat 24th December 1924.

(The address was in Sanskrit, followed by these few words in English).

My friends, we bow down to-day in reverence to him to whom we owe the idea of the Visva-bharati. It is a poet's vision. To this home of peace (Santiniketan) men can come from every quarter of the globe in a common endeavour to promote mutual understanding and good will.

It is a poet's vision but it came at a time when men were in sore need. The Gospel of Jesus had proved powerless when people rose against people, and each of them, in the name of the King of Peace, called upon men to take up arms. The Church invoked His name to support in turn the cause of each contending country. From the pulpit men were exhorted to kill one another.

The outlook in the West seemed hopeless when the Poet came and asked us to seek salvation through faith in new ideals. Wise men of the world smiled, but there were individuals who felt that there was yet hope for humanity. The Poet's vision must some day come true. The nations of the world must join hands in a common endeavour to build anew the history of the world.

I am waiting for such new development. It will not do to bring every country and every continent under European rule and European civilization. Asia, asleep for ages, must make her own contribution to the world culture. All the peoples of the world must come together working towards common ideals for the universal welfare.

There are differences and there are conflicts of interest and it would be idle to ignore them. But it is the endeavour of Visva-bharati to study them with a view to effect a reconcilation. Life is harmony, rich in variety. Death alone is uniform. The object of Visva-bharati is to achieve unity in diversity.

I take it to be a good omen that the Visva-bharati has been started in India. India has never attempted to conquer the world by force or violence. Millions in India have kept their faith in lofty ideals. Let us move forward inspired by the Spirit of India to fulfil the Poet's vision.

II.

A Brief Review of Early Chinese Literature.

By Ngo-Chang Lim, *Visiting Professor to Visva-bharati from China.*

India has been known to us generally as Hsin Tu, the Kingdom of the Hindus, or Si Yu, the Western Land ; and among the Chinese Buddhists as Fu Kuo, the land of the Buddhas, or as Si-t'ien, the West Heaven ; which epithets will serve to give you an idea of the mental attitude of the Chinese towards this country, which is in marked contrast to the dislike or contempt which they felt for the other countries round China ; the tribes to the North being called Hsing-Nu, or Hun slaves, those to the North-West and South-West simply Barbarians. To the East the Japanese were called Dwarf Pirates on account of their occasional attacks on our coast line.

Our first contact with India, as everyone knows, was through religion, resulting in religious intercourse and not commercial or political relationship. This epoch-making event took place when Kashyapamadanya visited China in the year 67 of the Christian Era, bearing with him images and scriptures. Both he and his companion were received with favour by the Chinese Emperor, Ming Ti, who built for them the White Horse temple. The teaching of Buddhism has continued to flow from then to the present time, and has permeated our religious as well as our daily life. Even our women and uncultured people are in the habit of using Buddhist phrases, without however being aware of their origin.

Besides these lofty religious ideals from which millions of weary souls in China, from rulers down to peasants, found inspiration and consolation, we gradually came to acquire a knowledge of Philology, Astronomy, Medicine and other branches of learning through the Indian priests and Chinese pilgrims. Sanskrit was taken as a model for a Chinese phonetic system which was called Ba-la-men Shu, or Brahmanical writing. Especially notable was the devotion of the Chinese pilgrims, Fah-hien, Hsiün-chang and a number of others, who did not shrink from undertaking the weary and dangerous journey to India. The overland route to India from China is strewn with the white bones of many such pilgrims, who died on their way through the intense heat of the desert, or the extreme cold of the snowy passes.

Fah-hien has told us that it took him six years to reach Central India

from North China by land, and three years to return by sea. And he tells us how in 413 A.D. he was nearly shipwrecked in the Bay of Bengal, when his boat encountered a storm and was found to be leaking. He threw everything overboard to lighten the ship, but clung to the books and images he was taking back with him, his prayer for safety showing evidently more anxiety for these than for his own life!

If, through this first auspicious contact in the past, we have been sharing common beliefs and a common culture with you, it is all the more incumbent on those of us who now follow in the footsteps of those Indian and Chinese pilgrim pioneers, torchbearers of the light of truth, love and peace, to see that this cultural bond is progressively strengthened.

The ability of Asia to solve her own problems, to achieve her own salvation as well as to share her light with the rest of the world, would not only be a blessing to the various Asiatic peoples, but to the world at large. Both India and China had once reached the zenith of their development, but since then both of them have come to a period of stagnation, of what scientists call arrested growth. Nations that have once begun to decline must sooner or later be wiped out of existence to make place for more vigorous peoples, unless a period of re-birth and diligent self-realisation follows.

India, China and Japan have awakened but, with perhaps the exception of Japan, the consequences of their re-awakening have not yet become fully apparent. It is my hope that India and China will take a different course from that of Japan in their future endeavours and struggles, and present to the world a better picture of peace. Let the innate gifts of peace and love for all humanity, which are a feature of these peoples steeped in long ages of culture, overflow from the hearts of the two great Asiatic countries. It would indeed be terrible if these two nations, between them comprising about one-third of the world's population and one-fourth of that of Asia, were to develop along aggressive lines. Blind patriotism is as undesirable as servile submission.

It is with these thoughts in my mind that I felt the desire to visit this country, in which I arrived with the humble spirit of a pilgrim. On the day after my landing, when I first saw the Bodhi trees, I was overcome with emotion. "What!" I cried, "Can these really be the Bodhi trees mentioned in our Chin Kang-ching, the Diamond Classic?" When I was coming over the Ganges, thronged with the devotees bathing in its holy waters, the same emotion overwhelmed me. The Ganges is known

to us as Heng Ho, or the Constant River, and rouses in us the same religious feeling as it does in the Buddhists of India. "Numberless as the sands of the Ganges" is a common phrase in the mouth of every Chinese.

To come back to my point, I come to this place because I hope to learn more about your country and take back what I learn to my own people. I hope also to convey to you, during my sojourn here, some of the more characteristic thoughts of our ancient and modern thinkers and also to give some account of the present social political and economical developments in China. I may further be of assistance to those of you who desire to be acquainted with our language in order to gain direct access to our literature.

Those who know the colossal output of Chinese literature during the long period which it has covered, will agree with me that it is impossible to deal with the whole of it, even in the barest outline, without running into volumes. What is more, there never has been compiled any history of Chinese Literature in the Western sense, nor has any systematic attempt been made to place these voluminous materials in chronological order. All our classification has been according to subject matter. I therefore propose to take this opportunity of placing before you only a few of its features.

Just to give you an idea of dimensions and arrangements let me mention two or three encyclopedias compiled during the Ming and the Ch'ing dynasties, which have become sources of systematic reference for our scholars. The biggest literary achievement of China is the Yung Lê Ta-tien compiled during the reign of the Ming Emperor, Ch'ing Chu, and completed in 1407 A. D. This huge encyclopoedia consists of 22,877 sections which are bound up in 11,000 volumes, its Table of Contents alone occupying 60 books. Owing to the prohibitive expenditure that would be entailed, it has never been printed. It had three transcripts, two of which perished at Nanking with the fall of the Ming dynasty, and part of the third was destroyed in Peking, at the entry of the Allied troops in 1900, when the Hamlin Library was set on fire. Some of these books have found their way to Europe and America.

The Yung Lê Ta-tien has four main divisions: (1) the Confucian Canons (2) History (3) Philosophy and (4) General literature, including both Buddhism and Tavoism. Some three thousand scholars were assembled at the Capital by special command, where they spent five years over its compilation. All kinds of books were collected and sent over from every corner of the Empire by royal agents and the governors of provinces, in

addition to voluntary loans from private libraries, for comparison and compilation.

This was soon followed, under the succeeding Emperor, Ying Tsung, by the compilation of a "Complete geographical Record of the Empire." This set consists of ninety volumes and is regarded as one of the celebrated works in Chinese Literature.

The Sze-k'u Ch'üen-shu, edited in the time of Kang-hsi, next deserves mention. This Encyclopoedia of Learning is arranged much in the same way as the Yung Lê Ta-tien, but is by no means a revised or condensed edition of its predecessor. This also has four divisions, *viz.* (1) The Ching or Classic (2) The Shih or Historical (3) The Tzû, comprising various schools of thought and (4) The Tsi, or Literary. The whole set runs to 5,026 sections, bound up in 1,628 octavo volumes of about 200 pages each.

When I was in Peking I had the curiosity to make a count of the different volumes dealing with different subjects. I found, to give some instances, that in the Classic division there are 114 volumes of texts, commentaries and notes on the books of Ch'un Ch'iu, or Annals of Spring and Autumn, a historical work composed by Confucius. On classical music there are 21 volumes. On Etymology and Philology there are 478 sections in 36 volumes. On Phonetics there are 388 sections in 33 volumes.

In the General Literature division there are numerous books on Religion. Among them is the Kai-Yuan, Buddhist records ; comprising 20 volumes, by a noted Buddhist scholar, Tsê-sheng, of Tang dynasty. He gives a detailed account of Buddhism since its introduction into China, and of the Buddhist scriptures. There are 3 volumes of "New Books on the Englightened Virtues," edited by Ch'ao Hui, in the Sung dynasty, largely based on the teachings of Buddha and Confucius, and exhorting men to be virtuous. It is interesting to note that this author, while characterising both Confucianism and Buddhism as sublime, distinguished the former as "refined" and the latter as "comprehensive."

Another set of books in this encyclopædia of K'ang-hsi is the Fu chu t'ung Tsai, or General Records of the Buddhist Patriarchs, in 22 volumes, by Nien Hsiang of the Yuan dynasty. This gives a chronological record of the rise and fall of the various sects of Buddhism. It is in these and similar books that one gets the earlier references to India.

The Emperor K'ang-hsi, under whose orders this encyclopædia, the Sze K'u Chuen Shu, was compiled and completed in the 47th year of his reign, was himself a lexicographer and a well-read Chinese scholar. The

Chinese Standard Dictionary has been named after him the K'ang-hsi Dictionary.

These are some of the materials in which students of Sinology will find an inexhaustible fund of enlightenment and inspiration. It may be of interest to note here that much is to be found in the volumes on Chinese history and literature that will throw light on the history, institutions and customs of neighbouring countries as well. For instance, a European professor in Burma has recently been writing a history of Burma, for the earlier materials of which he has, curiously enough, had to fall back upon Chinese sources.

Now that I have given some idea of the sources, let me touch upon some of the more conspicuous figures of their times for the purposes of my rough sketch.

Like other countries we also had our Mythological Age. P'an Ku, the Chinese Atlas, was believed to be the first living being on earth, through whom was accomplished the arduous task of chiselling out the earth from chaos. This will probably strike you, as it struck me, as being analogous to the allegory of Vishnu, the preserver, raising the world from the flood. It took our P'an Ku 18,000 years to complete his gigantic architectural work. After a long period following this, we come across another figure, also an architect, but not cast in so heroic a mould. This was You Ch'ao who taught men how to build houses, for before then they had been living in caves. Then came Sui Jên, the producer of fire, who like Prometheus taught his fellow men how to make a fire, his method being to rub together two pieces of wood. These myths, though they cannot be taken seriously from a historical standpoint, serve to give us a glimpse of how the Chinese mind came to apprehend the origin of things.

This was followed by a Legendary Age, in which there were admittedly five patriarchs, who did much for Chinese civilisation. The first of these was Fu Hsi (2852 B. C.). To him has been ascribed the invention of the Pa-kwa, or mysterious eight diagrams, a symbolic series on which was based a mystic philosophy. Though considerable credence may be attached even to the symbolic records of the earlier part of this period, we only touch firm ground when we come to the period when writing was invented. This came about in the reign of Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor. It was one of his courtiers, Ch'ang Chieh, who observing the shapes and lines of natural objects and of animals, first conceived the idea of forming written characters.

Passing over these earlier patriarchs we come to the times of the Emperors Yao, Shun and Yü, the three rulers whose names were immortalised by Confucius and Mencius. In the writings of Confucius we find mention of these in Shu-king, the Book of History, which records the main incidents in the reigns of some eighteen rulers of China, beginning with the three named above. On Yü, the third, fell the heavy responsibility of coping with a terrible innundation that devastated a great part of the then existing Kingdom. Though Chinese scholars used to regard the history of this period with great reserve, closer study has established the fact of this innundation being due to the overflow of the Hwang Ho River along which the early Chinese dwelt, by reference to the occurrence of an eclipse of the sun mentioned in Shi-king, the Book of Odes, for the heavenly movements were very carefully recorded by the historians and regarded with awe by rulers and people alike.

From this period of legends and semi-legends we come to the period of Lao-tzû and Confucius, Moti and Chuang-tzû, during which time Chinese Literature really began to take definite shape. We may say that this period commenced somewhere about 600 B. C. for Lao-tzû was born in the beginning of Chou Nig Wang's time, or about 570 B.C. ; and Confucius some 20 years after. For this there is ample documentary and textual evidence. These two names are well known throughout the civilised world, and portions of their work are familiar to scholars of every cultured nation. So here I need make only a few observations.

In Lao-tzû's works we often come across startling and revolutionary ideas ; then again we also find a strong belief in quietude, and in the inability of institutions, social or political, to bring true peace. The cause of disorder in the societies of man is the development by him of the unnatural and the artificial. The only effective remedy is a return to Nature, or the Tao as it was called by Lao-tzû, who was a contemporary of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in the West.

Confucius, on the other hand, aimed at the teaching of right conduct to men, from rulers down to peasants. He formulated a social code for all to observe. Benevolence, Righteousness and Universal Love,—these are his watchwords. The object of Confucius, as we gather from his writings, was to improve existing conditions, rather than to set up anything new. He never allowed himself to be drawn into talk about a future world, or about the soul, or departed spirits. He was too much occupied with the thought of the welfare of living men.

We cannot overlook, even in this brief sketch, one fact that influenced the thoughts of these early thinkers. The revolutionary ideas of Lao-tzû, and the peaceful tenets of Confucious, were alike the reflections of their time and of the period immediately preceding. Our history tells us that during the two or three hundred years immediately before their appearance, China had been distracted with constant petty warfare. She was also frequently menaced by the periodical attacks of the northern Tartars, from which the people suffered severely.

It is therefore only natural that Lao-tzû should get tired of the intrigues and political scheming of the rulers of his time, and so preach a course of inactivity which he believed would be more conducive to real happiness. On occasion he is found to wax indignant at the injustice wrought on the people by their rulers, whereupon he would rebuke them with the fierce denunciation of a revolutionary. For example he says: "The people are starved because of your heavy taxation ; the people are hard to govern because you are overdoing your government ; the people defy death because they are eager to live. Since they are not afraid to die, why threaten them with death?" He also says: "The more laws you make, the more robbers and thieves you will find."

Here is what Confucius says about the formation of Character in young men: "A youth should be filial at home and respectful abroad. He should be earnest and truthful ; he should overflow in love to all, but cultivate friendship for the good ; then devote his spare energy to the improvement of his mind." About learning he says: "Learning without thought is labour lost. Thought without learning is intellectual death." About contentment he says: "Riches and honours are what men desire ; yet, except in accordance with Right, these should not be enjoyed. Poverty and degradation are what men dread ; yet, except in accordance with Right, these should not be avoided." And on his disciples inquiring about the spirits of the departed, Confucius answers. "You are not even able to serve living men, how then should you serve departed spirits?" Further, on being asked about death, he repeats: "You do not even understand life, how then should you understand death?"

With Lao-tzû and Confucius we close this period of Early Chinese Literature.

THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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RED OLEANDERS

BY

RABINDRANATH

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

GAGANENDRANATH TAGORE

To

L. K. Elmhirst.

RED OLEANDERS.

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT.

The Curtain rises on a window covered by a network of intricate pattern in front of the Palace.

[*Nandini and Kishôr, a digger boy, come in.*]

Kishôr:

Have you enough flowers, Nandini? Here, I have brought some more.

Nandini:

Run away, Kishôr, do,—back to your work, quick! You'll be late again.

Kishôr:

I must steal some time from my digging and digging of nuggests to bring out flowers to you.

Nandini:

But they'll punish you, my boy, if they know.

Kishôr:

You said you *must* have red oleanders. I am glad they're hard to find in this place. Only one tree I discovered after days of search, nearly hidden away behind a rubbish heap.

Nandini :

Show it me. I'll go and gather the flowers myself.

Kishôr :

Don't be cruel, Nandini. This tree is my one secret which none shall know. I've always envied Bishu, he can sing to you songs that are his own. From now I shall have flowers which you'll have to take only from my hands.

Nandini :

But it breaks my heart to know that those brutes punish you.

Kishôr :

It makes these flowers all the more preciously mine. They come from my pain.

Nandini :

It pains me to accept anything which brings you hurt.

Kishôr :

I dream of dying one day for your sake, Nandini.

Nandini :

Is there nothing I can give you in return ?

Kishôr :

Promise that you will accept flowers only from me every morning.

Nandini :

I will. But do be careful.

Kishôr :

No, no, I shall be rash and defy their blows. My homage shall be my daily triumph.

[*Goes*].

[*Professor comes in.*]

Professor :

Nandini !

Nandini :

Yes, Professor !

Professor :

Why do you come and startle one, now and again, and then pass by? Since you awaken a cry in our hearts, what harm if you stop a moment in answer to it? Let us talk a little.

Nandini :

What need have you of me?

Professor :

If you talk of need, look over there !—You'll see our tunnel-diggers creeping out of the holes like worms, with loads of things of need. In this Yaksha Town all our treasure is of gold, the secret treasure of the dust. But the gold which is you, beautiful one, is not of the dust, but of the light which never owns any bond.

Nandini :

Over and over again you say this to me. What makes you wonder at me so, Professor?

Professor :

The sunlight gleaming through the forest thickets surprises nobody, but the light that breaks through a cracked wall is quite a different thing. In Yaksha Town, you are this light that startles. Tell me, what d'you think of this place?

Nandini :

It puzzles me to see a whole city thrusting its head underground, groping with both hands in the dark. You dig tunnels in the underworld and come out with dead wealth that the earth has kept buried for ages past.

Professor :

The *Jinn* of that dead wealth we invoke. If we can enslave him the whole world lies at our feet.

Nandini:

Then again, you hide your king behind a wall of netting. Is it for fear of people finding out that he's a man?

Professor:

As the ghost of our dead wealth is fearfully potent so is our ghastly royalty, made hazy by this net, with its inhuman power to frighten people.

Nandini:

All you say is a kind of made-up talk.

Professor:

Of course made-up. The naked is without a credential, it's the made-up clothes that define us. It delights me immensely to to discuss philosophy with you.

Nandini:

That's strange! You who burrow day and night in a mass of yellow pages, like your diggers in the bowels of the earth,—why waste your time on me?

Professor:

The privilege of wasting time proves one's wealth of time. We poor drudges are insects in a hole in this solid toil, you are the evening star in the rich sky of leisure. When we see you, our wings grow restless. Come to my room. For a moment allow me to be reckless in my waste of time.

Nandini:

No, not now. I have come to see your king, in *his* room.

Professor:

How can you enter through the screen?

Nandini:

I shall find my way through the net-work.

Professor:

Do you know, Nandini, I too live behind a net-work of scholarship. I am an unmitigated scholar, just as our king is an unmitigated king.

Nandini:

You are laughing at me, Professor. But tell me, when they brought me here, why didn't they bring my Rañjan also?

Professor:

It's their way to snatch things by fractions. But why should you want to drag your life's treasure down amongst this dead wealth of ours?

Nandini:

Because I know he can put a beating heart behind these dead ribs.

Professor:

Your own presence is puzzling enough for our governors here; if Rañjan also comes they will be in despair.

Nandini:

They do not know how comic they are,—Rañjan will bring God's own laughter in their midst and startle them into life.

Professor:

Divine laughter is the sunlight that melts ice, but not stones. Only the pressure of gross muscle can move our governors.

Nandini:

My Rañjan's strength is like that of your river, Sankhini,—it can laugh and yet it can break. Let me tell you a little secret news of mine. I shall meet Rañjan to-day.

Professor:

Who told you that?

Nandini:

Yes, yes, we shall meet. The news has come.

Professor:

Through what way could news come and yet evade the Governor?

Nandini:

Through the same way that brings news of the coming Spring.

Professor:

You mean it's in the air,—like the rumours which flush in the colour of the sky, or flutter in the dance of the wind?

Nandini:

I won't say more now. When Rañjan comes you'll see for yourself how rumours in the air come down on earth.

Professor:

Once she begins to talk of Rañjan there's no stopping Nandini's mouth! Well, well, I have my books, let me take my shelter behind them,—I dare not go on with this.

[*Coming back after going a little way*]

Nandini, let me ask you one thing. Aren't you frightened of our Yaksha Town?

Nandini:

Why should I feel afraid?

Professor:

All creatures fear an eclipse, not the full sun. Yaksha Town is a city under eclipse. The Shadow Demon, who lives in the gold caves, has eaten into it. It is not whole itself, neither does it allow any one else to remain whole. Listen to me, don't stay here. When you go, these pits will yawn all the wider for us, I know,—yet I say to you, fly; go and live

happily with Rañjan where people in their drunken fury don't tear the earth's veil to pieces.

[*Going a little way and then coming back*]

Nandini, will you give me a flower from your chain of red oleanders?

Nandini:

Why, what will you do with it?

Professor:

How often have I thought that there is some omen in these ornaments of yours.

Nandini:

I don't know of any.

Professor:

Perhaps your fate knows. In that red there is not only beauty, but also the fascination of fear.

Nandini:

Fear! Even in me?

Professor:

I don't know what event you have come to write with that crimson tint. There was the gardenia and the tuberose, there was white jasmine,—why did you leave them all and choose this flower? Do you know, we often choose our own fate thus, without knowing it!

Nandini:

Rañjan sometimes calls me Red Oleander. I feel that the colour of his love is red,—that red I wear on my neck, on my breast, on my arms.

Professor:

Well, just give me one of those flowers,—a moment's gift,—let me try to understand the meaning of its colour.

Nandini :

Here, take it. Rañjan is coming to-day,—out of my heart's delight I give it to you.

[*Professor goes*]

[*Gôkul, a digger, comes in*].

Gôkul :

Turn this way, woman! Who are you? I've never yet been able to understand you.

Nandini :

I'm nothing more than what you see. What need have you to understand me?

Gôkul :

I don't trust what I can't understand. For what purpose has the King brought you here?

Nandini :

Because I serve no purpose of his.

Gôkul :

You know some spell, I'm sure. You're snaring everybody here. You're a Witch! Those who are bewitched by your beauty will come to their death.

Nandini :

That death will not be yours, Gôkul, never fear! You'll die digging.

Gôkul :

Let me see, let me see, what's that dangling over your forehead?

Nandini :

Only a tassel of red oleanders.

Gôkul :

What does it mean?

Nandini :

It has no meaning at all.

Gôkul:

I don't believe you, one bit! You're up to some trickery. Some evil will befall us before the day is out. That's why you have got yourself up like this. Oh you terrible, terrible witch!

Nandini:

What makes you think me so terrible?

Gôkul:

You're looking like an ominous torch with a red flame. Let me go and warn these fools.—Beware! Beware!

[*He goes*

Nandini (*knocking at the net-work*):

Do you hear me?

A voice (*from behind the scenes*):

I hear you. But don't call me,—I have no time.

Nandini:

Let me come inside. My heart is full to-day.

Voice:

No, not into my room.

Nandini:

I have brought you a garland of white *kunda* flowers.

Voice:

Wear it yourself.

Nandini:

My own garland is of red oleanders.

Voice:

I am like a mountain peak, my bareness is my adornment.

Nandini:

Like waterfalls running down the peak, this white flower-chain will sway on your breast. Open the netting, I want to come in.

Voice:

I can't allow it. There's no time.

Nandini:

Don't you hear that song in the distance?

Voice:

What are they singing?

Nandini:

The autumn song:

Hark, 'tis Autumn calling:
"Come, O, come away!"—
Her basket is heaped with corn.

Don't you see the September sun is spreading the glow of the ripening corn in the air?

Drunken with the perfumed wine of wind,
the sky seems to sway among the shivering corn,
its sunlight trailing on the fields.

You too come out, King!—out into the fields.

Voice:

Fields! What could I do there?

Nandini:

The work there is much simpler than your work in Yaksha Town.

Voice:

It's the simple which is impossible for me. A lake cannot run out dancing, like a frolicsome waterfall. Leave me now, I have no time.

Nandini :

The day you let me into your store-house the blocks of gold did not surprise me,—what amazed me was the immense strength with which you lifted and arranged them. But can blocks of gold ever answer to the swinging rhythm of your arms in the same way as fields of corn? Are you not afraid, King, of handling the dead wealth of the earth?

Voice :

What is there to fear?

Nandini :

The living heart of the earth gives itself up in love and life and beauty, but when you rend its bosom and disturb the dead, you bring up with your booty the curse of its dark demon, blind and hard, cruel and envious. Don't you see everybody here is either angry, or suspicious, or afraid?

Voice :

Curse?

Nandini :

Yes, the curse of grabbing and killing.

Voice :

But we bring up strength. Does not my strength please you, Nandini?

Nandini :

Indeed it does. Therefore I ask you, come out into the light, step on the ground, let the earth be glad.

Voice :

Do you know, Nandini, you too are half-hidden behind an evasion,—you mystery of beauty! I want to pluck you out of it, to grasp you within my closed fist, to handle you, scrutinise you,—or else to break you to pieces.

Nandini:

Whatever do you mean?

Voice:

Why can't I strain out the tint of your oleanders and build a dream out of it to keep before my eyes? Those few frail petals guard it and hinder me. Within you there is the same hindrance, so strong because so soft. Nandini, will you tell me what you think of me?

Nandini:

Not now, you have no time. Let me go.

Voice:

No, no, don't go. Do tell me what you think of me.

Nandini:

Have I not told you often enough? I think you are wonderful. Strength swelling up in your arms, like rolling clouds before a storm,—it makes my heart dance within me.

Voice:

And when your heart dances to see Rañjan, is that also——

Nandini:

Let that be,—you have no time.

Voice:

There *is* time,—for this; only tell me, then go.

Nandini:

That dance rhythm is different, you won't understand.

Voice:

I will, I *must* understand.

Nandini:

I can't explain it clearly. Let me go.

Voice:

Tell me, at least, whether you like me.

Nandini:

Yes, I like you.

Voice:

The same as Rañjan?

Nandini:

Again the same question! I tell you, you don't understand these things.

Voice:

I *do* understand, a little. I know what the difference is between Rañjan and me. In me there is only strength, in Rañjan there is magic.

Nandini:

What d'you mean by magic?

Voice:

Shall I explain? Underground there are blocks of stone, iron, gold,—there you have the image of strength. On the surface grows the grass, the flower blossoms,—there you have the play of magic. I can extract gold from the fearsome depths of secrecy, but to wrest that magic from the near at hand I fail.

Nandini:

You have no end of things, yet why always covet?

Voice:

All I possess is so much dead weight. No increase of gold can create a particle of a touchstone, no increase of power can ever come up to youth. I can only guard by force. If I had Rañjan's youth I could leave you free and yet hold you fast. My time is spent in knotting the binding rope, but, alas, everything else can be kept tied, except joy.

Nandini:

It is you who entangle yourself in your own net, then why keep on fretting?

Voice:

You will never understand. I, who am a desert, stretch out my hand to you, a tiny blade of grass, and cry: I am parched, I am bare, I am weary. The flaming thirst of this desert licks up one fertile field after another, only to enlarge itself,—it can never annex the life of the frailest of grasses.

Nandini:

One would never think you were so tired.

Voice:

One day, Nandini, in a far off land, I saw a mountain as weary as myself. I could not guess that all its stones were aching inwardly. One night I heard a noise, as if some giant's evil dream had moaned and moaned and suddenly snapped asunder. Next morning I found the mountain had disappeared in the chasm of a yawning earthquake. That made me understand how overgrown power crushes itself inwardly by its own weight. I see in you something quite opposite.

Nandini:

What is it you see in me?

Voice:

The dance rhythm of the All.

Nandini:

I don't understand.

Voice:

The rhythm that lightens the enormous weight of matter. To that rhythm the bands of stars and planets go about dancing from sky to sky, like so many minstrel boys. It is that rhythm, Nandini, that makes you so simple, so perfect. How small you are compared to me, yet I envy you.

Nandini:

You have cut yourself off from everybody and so deprived yourself.

Voice:

I keep myself apart, that it may become easy for me to plunder the world's big treasure-houses. Nevertheless there are gifts that your little flower-like fingers can easily reach, but not all the strength of my body,—gifts hidden in God's closed hand. That hand I must force open some day.

Nandini:

When you talk like that, I don't follow you. Let me go.

Voice:

Go then; but here, I stretch out this hand of mine from my window, place your hand on it for a moment.

Nandini:

Only a hand, and the rest of you hidden? It frightens me!

Voice:

Everybody flies from me because they only see my hand.

But if I wished to hold you with all of me, would you come to me, Nandini?

Nandini:

Why talk like this when you wouldn't even let me come into your room?

Voice:

My busy time, overloaded with work, dragged along against obstruction, is not for you. On the day when you can arrive, full sail before the wind, into the bosom of my full leisure, the hour of welcome will strike. Even if that wind be a storm, all will be well. That hour is not yet come.

Nandini:

Rañjan will bring that delightful wind here, I tell you. He carries his holiday-time with him, even in his work.

Voice:

He has the red wine of oleanders to fill up his cup. But to me you want to pass on an empty leisure. Where is the wine?

Nandini:

Let me go now.

Voice:

Answer me first.

Nandini:

How to fulfil leisure you will learn from Rañjan. He is so beautiful.

Voice:

Beauty only responds to beauty. Its lute strings break when force tries to snatch an answer. But no more of this. Go, go away, or else there will be trouble.

Nandini:

I go. But I tell you, my Rañjan is coming to-day. You cannot prevent him.

[*She goes*]

[*Phágulal, the digger, and his wife Chandrá, come in.*]

Phágulal:

My bottle, Chandrá? Out with it!

Chandrá :

What! Drink from early morning?

Phágulal :

Isn't it our holiday? Yesterday was the fast day of the War Goddess. To-day they worship the Flag.

Chandrá :

Must you drink just because it's a holiday? In our village home, on feast days, you never——

Phágulal :

Freedom itself was enough for the holidays in our village. The caged bird spends its holiday knocking against the bars. In Yaksha Town holidays are more of a nuisance than work.

Chandrá :

Let's go back home, then.

Phágulal :

The road to our home is closed for ever.

Chandrá :

How's that?

Phágulal :

Our homes don't yield them any profit.

Chandrá :

But are we closely fitted to their profits only,—
like husks to grains of corn,—with nothing of us left over?

Phágulal :

Our mad Bishu says : to remain whole is useful only for the lamb itself; those who eat it prefer to leave out its horns and hooves, and even object to its bleating when butchered.
There's the madcap, singing as he goes.

Chandrá :

It's only the last few days that his songs have burst forth.

Phágulal :

That's true.

Chandrá :

He's been possessed by Nandini. She draws his heart and his songs too.

Phágulal :

No wonder.

Chandrá :

Indeed ! You'd better be careful. She'll next be bringing out songs from *your* throat,—which would be rough on our neighbours. The witch is up to all kinds of tricks, and is sure to bring misfortune.

Phágulal :

Bishu's misfortune is nothing recent, he knew Nandini long before coming here.

Chandrá :

(*Calling out*) I say, Bishu, come this way. May be you'll find somebody here also to listen to your singing,—it won't be altogether thrown away.

[*Bishu comes in, singing*]

Bishu (*sings*) :

Boatman of my dreams,
The sail is filled with a boisterous breeze
and my mad heart sings
to the lilt of the rocking of thy boat,
at the call of the far away landing.

Chandrá :

I know who the boatman of your dreams is.

Bishu :

How should you know from outside? You haven't seen from inside my boat.

Chandrá :

Your boat is going to get wrecked one of these days, let me tell you,—by that pet Nandini of yours.

[*Gôkul, the digger, comes in*]

Gôkul :

I say Bishu, I don't quite trust your Nandini.

Bishu :

Why, what has she done?

Gôkul :

She does nothing, that's the rub. I don't understand the way she goes on.

Chandrá :

To see her flaunting her prettiness all over the place makes me sick.

Gôkul :

We can trust features that are plain enough to understand.

Bishu :

I know the atmosphere of this place breeds contempt for beauty. There must be beauty even in hell; but nobody there can understand it, that's their cruellest punishment.

Chandrá :

May be we are fools, but even our Governor here can't stand her—d'you know that?

Bishu :

Take care, Chandrá, lest you catch the infection of our Governor's eyes—then perhaps yours too will redden at the sight of us. What say you, Phágulal?

Phágulal:

To tell you the truth, brother, when I see Nandini, I feel ashamed to think of myself. I can't utter a word when she's there.

Gôkul:

The day will come when you'll know her to your cost,—perhaps too late.

[*Goes*]

Phágulal:

Bishu, your friend Chandrá wants to know why we drink.

Bishu:

God in his mercy has everywhere provided a liberal allowance of drink. We men with our arms supply the output of our muscles, you women with yours supply the wine of embraces. In this world there is hunger to force us to work; but there's also the green of the woods, the gold of the sunshine, to make us drunk with their holiday-call.

Chandrá:

You call these things *drink*?

Bishu:

Yes, drinks of life, an endless stream of intoxication. Take my case. I come to this place; I am set to work burgling the underworld; for me nature's own ration of spirits is stopped; so my inner man craves the artificial wine of the market place.

(*Sings*)

My life, your sap has run dry,
Fill then the cup with the wine of death,
That flushes all emptiness with its laughter.

Chandrá:

Come, brother, let us fly from here.

Bishu :

To that boundless tavern, underneath the blue canopy? Alas, the road is closed, and we seek consolation in the stolen wine of the prison house. No open sky, no leisure for us; so we have distilled the essence of all the song and laughter, all the sunlight of the twelve hours' day into one draught of liquid fire.

(*Sings*)

Thy sun is hidden amid a mass of murky cloud.
Thy day has smudged itself black in dusty toil.
Then let the dark night descend
the last comrade of drunken oblivion.
Let it cover thy tired eyes with the mist
that will help thee desperately to lose
thyself.

Chandrá :

Well, well, Bishu, you men have gone to the dogs in Yaksha Town, if you like, but we women haven't changed at all.

Bishu :

Haven't you? Your flowers have faded, and you are all slavering for gold.

Chandrá :

No, never!

Bishu :

I say, yes. That Phágulal toils for hours over and and above the twelve,—why? For a reason unknown to him, unknown even to you. But *I* know. It's your dream of gold that lashes him on to work, more severely than the foreman's whip.

Chandrá :

Very well. Then why don't we fly from here, and go back home?

Bishu :

Your Governor has closed the way as well as the will to return. If you go there to-day you will fly back here tomorrow, like a caged bird to its cage, hankering for its drugged food.

Phágulal :

I say, Bishu, once upon a time you came very near spoiling your eyesight poring over books ; how is it they made you ply the spade along with the rest of us stupid boors ?

Chandrá :

All this time we've been here, we haven't got from Bishu the answer to this particular question.

Phágulal :

Yet we all know it.

Bishu :

Well, out with it then !

Phágulal :

They employed you to spy on us.

Bishu :

If you knew that, how is it you let me off alive ?

Phágulal :

But, we knew also, that game was not in your line.

Chandrá :

How is it you couldn't stick to such a comfortable job, brother ?

Bishu :

Comfortable job ? To stick to a living being like a carbuncle on his back ?

I said : "I must go home, my health is failing."

"Poor thing," said the Governor, "how can you go home in such a state ? However, there's no harm in your trying."

Well, I did try. And then I found that, as soon as one enters the maw of Yaksha Town its jaws shut fast, and the one road that remains

open leads withinwards. Now I am swamped in that interior without hope and without light, and the only difference between you and me is, that the Governor looks down upon me even worse than upon you. Man despises the broken pot of his own creation more than the withered leaf fallen from the tree.

Phágulal :

What does that matter, Bishu? You have risen high in our esteem.

Bishu :

Discovery only means death. Where your favour falls there falls the Governor's glance. The more noisily the yellow frogs welcome the black toad, the sooner their croaking points him out to the boa-constrictor.

Chandrá :

But when will your work be finished?

Bishu :

The calendar never records the last day. After the first day comes the second, after the second the third. There's no such thing as getting finished here. We're always digging—one yard, two yards, three yards. We go on raising gold nuggets,—after one nugget another, then more and more and more. In Yaksha Town figures follow one another in rows and never arrive at any conclusion. That's why we are not men to them, but only numbers.—Phágu, what's yours?

Phágulal :

I'm No. 47 V.

Bishu :

I'm 69 Ng.

Chandrá :

Brother, they've hoarded such heaps of gold, can't they stop digging now?

Bishu :

There's always an end to things of need, no doubt; so we stop when we've had enough to eat. But we don't need drunkenness, therefore there's no end to it. These nuggets are the drink—the solid drink—of our Gold King. Don't you see?

Chandrá :

No, I don't.

Bishu :

Cups in hand, we forget that we are chained to our limits. Gold blocks in hand, our master fancies he's freed from the gravitation of the commonplace, and is soaring in the rarest of upper heights.

Chandrá :

In this season the villages are preparing for their harvest festival. Let's go home.

Phágulal :

Don't worry me, Chandra. A thousand times over have I told you that in these parts there are high roads to the market, to the burning ground, to the scaffold,—everywhere except to the homeland.

Chandrá :

If we were to go to the Governor, and just tell him——

Bishu :

Hasn't your woman's wit seen through the Governor yet?

Chandrá :

Why he seems to be so nice and——

Bishu :

Yes, nice and polished, like the crocodile's teeth, which fit into one another with so thorough a bite that the King himself can't unlock the jaw, even if he wants to.

Chandrá :

There comes the Governor.

Bishu :

Then it's all up with us. He's sure to have overheard——

Chandrá :

Why, we haven't said anything so very——

Bishu :

Sister, we can only say the words,—they put in the meaning.

[*The Governor comes in.*]

Chandrá :

Sir Governor!

Governor :

Well, my child?

Chandrá :

Grant us leave to go home for a little.

Governor :

Why, aren't the rooms we have given you excellent, much better than the ones at home? We have even kept a state watchman for your safety. Hullo, 69 Ng, to see you amongst these people reminds one of a heron come to teach paddy birds how to cut capers.

Bishu :

Sir, your jesting does not reassure me. Had my feet the strength to make others dance, would I not have run away from here, first thing? Especially after the striking examples I've seen of the fate that overtakes dancing masters in this country. As things are, one's legs tremble even to walk straight.

Chandrá :

Give us leave, Sir Governor, do give us leave. Let us go just for once, and see our waving

fields of barleycorn in the ear, and the ample shade of our banian tree with its hanging roots. I cannot tell you how our hearts ache. Don't you see that your men here work all day in the dark, and in the evening steep themselves in the denser dark of drunkenness? Have you no pity for them?

Governor:

My dear child, surely you know of our constant anxiety for their welfare. That is exactly why I have sent for our High Preacher, Kenarám Gosain himself, to give moral talks to the men. Their votive fees will pay for his upkeep. Every evening the Gosain will come and———

Phágulal:

That won't do, sir! Now, at worst, we get drunk of an evening, but if we are preached to every night, there'll be manslaughter!

Bishu:

Hush, hush, Phágulal.

[*Preacher Gosain comes in*]

Governor:

Talk of the Preacher and he appears. Your Holiness, I do you reverence. These workmen of ours sometimes feel disturbed in their weak minds. Deign to whisper in their ears some texts of peace. The need is urgent.

Gosain:

These people? Are they not the very incarnation of the sacred Tortoise of our scripture, that held up the sinking earth on its back? Because they meekly suppress themselves underneath their burden, the upper world can keep its head aloft. The very thought sends a thrill through my body!

Just think of it friend 47 V, yours is the duty of supplying food to this mouth which chants the holy name. With the sweat of your brow have you woven this wrap printed with the holy name, which exalts this devoted body. Surely that is no mean privilege. May you remain for ever undisturbed, is my benediction, for then the grace of God will abide with you likewise.

My friends, repeat aloud the holy name of Hari, and all your burdens will be lightened. The name of Hari shall be taken in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end,—so say the scriptures.

Chandrá :

How sweet ! It's long since I have heard such words ! Give, oh give me a little dust off your feet !

Phágulal :

Stop this waste of money, Governor. If its our offerings you want, we can stand it, but we're fairly sick of this cant.

Bishu :

Once Phágulal runs amok it's all over with the lot of you. Hush, hush, Phágulal !

Chandrá :

Are you bent on spoiling your chances both in this world and the next, you wretched man ? You were never like this before. Nandini's ill wind has blown upon you,—and no mistake.

Gosain :

What charming naïveté, Sir Governor ! What's in their heart is always on their lips. What can we teach them ?—it's they who'll teach us a lesson. You know what I mean.

Governor :

I know where the root of the trouble is. I'll have

to take them in hand myself, I see. Meanwhile, pray go to the next parish and chant them the holy name,—the sawyers there have taken to grumbling, somewhat.

Gosain :

Which parish did you say?

Governor :

Parish T-D. No : 71 T is headman there. It ends to the left of where No : 65 of Row M lives.

Gosain :

My son, though Parish T-D may not yet be quieted, the whole Row of M's have lately become steeped in a beautiful spirit of meekness. Still it is better to keep an extra police force posted in the parish some time longer. Because, as you know our scripture says,—pride is our greatest foe. After the strength of the police has helped to conquer pride, then comes our turn. I take my leave.

Chandrá :

Forgive these men, Your Holiness, and give them your blessing, that they may follow the right path.

Gosain :

Fear not, good woman, they'll all end thoroughly pacified.

[*The Gosain goes*]

Governor :

I say 69 Ng, the temper of your parish seems to be somewhat strained.

Bishu :

That's nothing strange. The Gosain called them the incarnation of the Tortoise. But, according to scripture, incarnations change; and, when the Tortoise gave place to the Boar, in place of hard shell came out aggressive teeth, so that all-suffering patience was transformed into defiant obstinacy.

Chandrá :

But, Sir Governor, don't forget my request.

Governor :

I have heard it and will bear it in mind.

[*He goes*]

Chandrá :

Ah now, didn't you see how nice the Governor is? How he smiles everytime he talks!

Bishu :

Crocodile's teeth begin by smiling and end by biting.

Chandrá :

Where does his bite come in?

Bishu :

Don't you know he's going to make it a rule not to let the workmen's wives accompany them here.

Chandrá :

Why?

Bishu :

We have a place in their account book as numbers, but women's figures do not mate with figures of arithmetic.

Chandrá :

O dear! but have they no womenfolk of their own?

Bishu :

Their ladies are besotted with the wine of gold, even worse than their husbands.

Chandrá :

Bishu, you had a wife at home,—What's become of her ?

Bishu :

So long as I filled the honored post of spy, they used to invite her to those big mansions to play cards with their ladies. Ever since I joined Phágulal's set, all that was stopped, and she left me in a huff at the humiliation.

Chandrá :

For shame ! But look, brother Bishu, what a grand procession ! One palanquin after another ! Don't you see the sparkle of the jewelled fringes of the elephant-seats ? How beautiful the out-riders on horse-back look, as if they had bits of sunlight pinned on the points of their spears !

Bishu :

Those are the Governor's and Deputy Governor's ladies, going to the Flag-worship.

Chandrá :

Bless my soul, what a gorgeous array and how fine they look !

I say, Bishu, if you hadn't given up that job, would you have gone along with that set in this grand style ?—and that wife of yours, surely———

Bishu :

Yes, we too should have come to just such a pass.

Chandrá :

Is there no way going back,—none whatever ?

Bishu :

There is,—through the gutter.

A distant voice:

Bishu, my mad one!

Bishu:

Yes, my mad girl!

Phágulal:

There's Nandini. There'll be no more of Bishu for us, for the rest of the day.

Chandrá:

Tell me, Bishu, what does she charm you with?

Bishu:

The charm of sorrow.

Chandrá:

Why do you talk so topsy-turvy?

Bishu:

She reminds me that there are sorrows, to forget which is the greatest of sorrow.

Phágulal:

Please to speak plainly, Bishu, otherwise it becomes positively annoying!

Bishu:

The pain of desire for the near belongs to the animal, the sorrow of aspiration for the far belongs to man. That far away flame of my eternal sorrow is revealed through Nandini.

Chandrá:

Brother, we don't understand these things. But one thing I do understand and that is,—the less you men can make out a girl, the more she attracts you! We simple women,—our price is not so high, but we at least keep you on the straight path. I warn you, once for all, that girl with her noose of red oleanders will drag you to perdition.

[*Chandra and Phagulal go*]

[*Nandini comes in*]

Nandini:

My mad one, did you hear their autumn songs this morning?

Bishu:

Is my morning like yours that I should hear singing? Mine is only a swept-away remnant of the weary night.

Nandini:

In my gladness of heart I thought I'd stand on the rampart and join in their song. But the guards would not let me, so I've come to you.

Bishu:

I am not a rampart.

Nandini:

You are *my* rampart. When I come to you I seem to climb high, I find the open light.

Bishu:

Ever since coming to Yaksha Town the sky has dropped out of my life. I felt as if they had pounded me in the same mortar with all the fractions of men here, and rolled us into a solid lump.

Then you came and looked into my face in a way that made me sure some light could still be seen through me.

Nandini:

In this closed fort a bit of sky survives only between you and me, my mad one.

Bishu:

Through that sky my songs can fly towards you.

(*Sings*)

You keep me awake that I may sing to you,
O Breaker of my sleep!
And so my heart you startle with your call,
O Waker of my grief!

The shades of evening fall,
the birds come to their nest.
The boat arrives ashore,
yet my heart knows no rest,
O Waker of my grief!

Nandini:

The waker of your grief, Bishu?

Bishu:

Yes, you are my messenger from the unreachable shore. The day you came to Yaksha Town a gust of salt air knocked at my heart.

Nandini:

But I never had any message of this sorrow of which you sing.

Bishu:

Not even from Rañjan?

Nandini:

No, he holds an oar in each hand and ferries me across the stormy waters; he catches wild horses by the mane and rides with me through the woods; he shoots an arrow between the eyebrows of the tiger on the spring, and scatters my fear with loud laughter. As he jumps into our Nagai river and disturbs its current with his joyous splashing, so he disturbs me with his tumultuous life. Desperately he stakes his all on the game and thus has he won me.

You also were there with us, but you held aloof, and at last something urged you one day to leave our gambling set. At the time of your parting you looked at my face in a way I could not quite make out. After that I've had no news of you for long. Tell me where you went off to then.

Bishu :

My boat was tied to the bank ; the rope snapped ; the wild wind drove it into the trackless unknown.

Nandini :

But who dragged you back from there to dig for nuggets here in Yaksha Town ?

Bishu :

A woman. Just as a bird on the wing is brought to the ground by a chance arrow, so did she bring me down to the dust. I forgot myself.

Nandini :

How could she touch you ?

Bishu :

When the thirsty heart despairs of finding water it's easy enough for it to be deluded by a mirage, and driven in barren quest from desert to desert.

One day, while I was gazing at the sunset clouds, she had her eye upon the golden spire of the Governor's palace. Her glance challenged me to take her over there. In my foolish pride I vowed to do so. When I did bring her here, under the golden spire, the spell was broken.

Nandini :

I've come to take you away from here.

Bishu :

Since you have moved even the king of this place, what power on earth can prevent you ? Tell me, don't you feel afraid of him ?

Nandini :

I did fear him from outside that screen. But now I've seen him inside.

Bishu :

What was he like ?

Nandini :

Like a man from the epics,—his forehead like the gateway of a tower, his arms the iron bolts of some inaccessible fortress.

Bishu :

What did you see when you went inside?

Nandini :

A falcon was sitting on his left wrist. He put it on the perch and gazed at my face. Then, just as he had been stroking the falcon's wings, he began gently to stroke my hand. After a while he suddenly asked : "Don't you fear me, Nandini?"

"Not in the least," said I.

Then he buried his fingers in my unbound hair and sat long with closed eyes.

Bishu :

How did you like it?

Nandini :

I liked it. Shall I tell you how? It was as if he were a thousand year old banyan tree, and I a tiny little bird; when I lit on a branch of his and had my little swing, he needs must have felt a thrill of delight to his very marrow, I loved to give that bit of joy to that lonely soul.

Bishu :

Then what did he say?

Nandini :

Starting up and fixing his spear-point gaze on my face, he suddenly said : "I want to know you."

I felt a shiver run down my body and asked : "what is there to know?—I am not a manuscript!"

"I know all there is in manuscripts," said he, "but I don't know you." Then he became excited and cried : "Tell me all about Rañjan. Tell me how you love him."

I talked on : "I love Rañjan as the rudder in the water might love the sail in the sky, answering its rhythm of wind in the rhythm of waves."

He listened quietly, staring like a big greedy boy. All of a sudden he startled me by exclaiming : "Could you die for him?"

"This very moment" I replied.

"Never," he almost roared, as if in anger.

"Yes, I could," I repeated.

"What good would that do you?"

"I don't know," said I.

Then he writhed and shouted : "Go away from my room, go, go at once, don't disturb me in my work."

I could not understand what that meant.

Bishu :

He gets angry when he can't understand.

Nandini :

Bishu, don't you feel pity for him?

Bishu :

The day when God will be moved to pity for him, he will die.

Nandini :

No, no, you don't know how desperately he wants to live.

Bishu :

You will see this very day what his living means. I don't know whether you'll be able to bear the sight.

Nandini :

There, look, there's a shadow. I am sure the Governor has secretly heard what we've been saying.

Bishu :

This place is dark with the Governor's shadow, it is everywhere. How do you like him?

Nandini :

I have never seen anything so lifeless,—like a cane stick cut from the cane bush,—no leaves, no roots, no sap in the veins.

Bishu :

Cut off from life, he spends himself in repressing life.

Nandini :

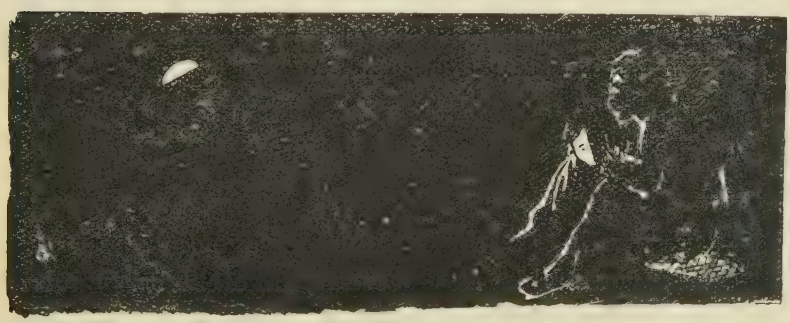
Hush, he will hear you.

Bishu :

He hears even when you are silent, which is all the more dangerous. When I am with the diggers I am careful in my speech, so much so that the Governor thinks I'm the sorriest of the lot, and spares me out of sheer contempt. But, my mad girl, when I am with you my mind scorns to be cautious.

Nandini :

No, no, you must not court danger. There comes the Governor.



[*The Governor comes in*]

Governor:

Hallo, 69 Ng! you seem to be making friends with everybody, without distinction.

Bishu:

You may remember that I began by making friends even with you, only it was the distinction that stood in the way.

Governor:

Well, what are we discussing now?

Bishu:

We are discussing how to escape from this fortress of yours.

Governor:

Really? So recklessly, that you don't even mind confessing it?

Bishu:

Sir Governor, it doesn't need much cleverness to know that when a captive bird pecks at the bars it's not in the spirit of caress. What does it matter whether that's openly confessed or not?

Governor:

The captives' want of love we were aware of, but their not fearing to admit it has become evident only recently.

Nandini:

Won't you let Rañjan come?

Governor:

You will see him this very day.

Nandini:

I knew that; still, for your message of hope I wish you victory. Governor, take this garland of *kunda* flowers.

Governor:

Why throw away the garland thus, and not keep it for Rañjan?

Nandini:

There *is* a garland for him.

Governor:

Aha, I thought so! I suppose it's the one hanging round your neck. The garland of victory may be of *kunda* flowers, the gift of the hand; but the garland of welcome is of red oleanders, the gift of the heart. Well, let's be quick in accepting what comes from the hand, for that will fade; as for the heart's offering, the longer it waits the more precious it grows.

[*The Governor goes*]

Nandini:

(*Knocking at the window*) Do you hear? Let me come into your room.

Voice (*from behind the scenes*):

Why always the same futile request? Who is that with you? A pair to Rañjan?

Bishu:

No, King, I am the obverse side of Rañjan, on which falls the shadow.

Voice:

What use has Nandini for you?

Bishu:

The use which music has for the hollow of the flute.

Voice:

Nandini, what is this man to you?

Nandini:

He's my partner in music. My heart soars in his voice, my pain cries in his tunes,—that's what he tells me.

(Sings)

"I love, I love,"—'Tis the cry that breaks out from the bosom of earth and water.

Voice:

So that's your partner! What if I dissolved your partnership this very minute?

Nandini:

Why are you so cross? Haven't you any companion yourself?

Voice:

Has the midday sun any companion?

Nandini:

Well, let's change the subject. What's that? what's that in your hand?

Voice:

A dead frog.

Nandini:

What for?

Voice:

Once upon a time this frog got into a hole in a stone, and in that shelter it existed for three thousand years. I have learnt from it the secret of continuing to exist, but to live it does not know. To-day I felt bored and smashed its shelter. I've thus saved it from existing for ever. Isn't that good news?

Nandini:

Your stone walls will also fall away from around me to-day,—I shall meet Rañjan.

Voice:

I want to see you both together.

Nandini:

You won't be able to see from behind your net.

Voice:

I shall let you sit inside my room.

Nandini:

What will you do with us?

Voice:

Nothing, I only want to know you.

Nandini:

When you talk of knowing, it frightens me.

Voice:

Why?

Nandini:

I feel that you have no patience with things that cannot be known, but can only be felt.

Voice:

I dare not trust such things lest they should play me false. Now go away, don't waste my time.—No, no, wait a little. Give me that tassel of red oleanders which hangs from your hair.

Nandini:

What will you do with it?

Voice:

When I look at those flowers it seems to me as if the red light of my evil star has appeared in their shape. At times I want to snatch them from you and tear them to pieces. Again I think that if Nandini were ever to place that spray of flowers on my head, with her own hands, then——

Nandini:

Then what?

Voice:

Then perhaps I might die in peace.

Nandini:

Some one loves red oleanders and calls me by that name. It is in remembrance of him that I wear these flowers.

Voice:

Then, I tell you, they're going to be *his* evil star as well as *mine*.

Nandini:

Don't say such things, for shame! I am going.

Voice:

Where?

Nandini:

I shall go and sit near the gate of your fort.

Voice:

Why?

Nandini:

When Rañjan comes he'll see I am waiting for him.

Voice:

I should like to tread hard on Rañjan and grind him in the dust.

Nandini:

Why pretend to frighten me?

Voice:

Pretend, you say? Don't you know I am really fearsome?

Nandini:

You seem to take pleasure in seeing people frightened at you. In our village plays Srikantha takes the part of a demon; when he comes on the stage, he is delighted if the children are terrified. You are like him. Do you know what I think?

Voice:

What is it?

Nandini:

The people here trade on frightening others. That's why they have put you behind a net-

work and dressed you fantastically. Don't you feel ashamed to be got up like a bogey-man?

Voice:

How dare you!

Nandini:

Those whom you have scared all along will one day feel ashamed to be afraid. If my Rañjan were here, he would have snapped his fingers in your face, and not been afraid even if he died for it.

Voice:

Your impudence is something great. I should like to stand you up on the top of a heap of everything I've smashed throughout my life. And then——

Nandini:

Then what?

Voice:

Then, like a squeezed bunch of grapes with its juice running out from between the gripping fingers, if I could but hold you tight with these two hands of mine,—and then—go, go, run away, at once, at once!

Nandini:

If you shout at me so rudely, I'll stay on, do what you will!

Voice:

I long savagely to prove to you how cruel I am. Have you never heard moans from inside my room?

Nandini:

I have. Whose moaning was it?

Voice:

The hidden mystery of life, wrenched away by me, bewails its torn ties. To get fire from a tree

you have to burn it. Nandini, there is fire within you too, red fire. One day I shall burn you and extract that also.

Nandini:

Oh, you are cruel!

Voice:

I must either gather or scatter. I can feel no pity for what I do not get. Breaking is a fierce kind of getting.

Nandini:

But why thrust out your clenched fist like that?

Voice:

Here, I take away my fist. Now fly, as the dove flies from the shadow of a hawk.

Nandini:

Very well, I will go, and not vex you any more.

Voice:

Here, listen, come back, Nandini!

Nandini:

What is it?

Voice:

On your face, there is the play of life in your eyes and lips; at the back of you flows your black hair, the silent fall of death. The other day when my hands sank into it they felt the soft calm of dying. I long to sleep with my face hidden inside those thick black clusters. You don't know how tired I am!

Nandini:

Don't you ever sleep?

Voice:

I feel afraid to sleep.

Nandini:

Let me sing you the latest song that I've learnt

(*Sings*)

"I love, I love" is the cry that breaks out
from the bosom of earth and water.
The sky broods like an aching heart,
the horizon is tender like eyes misted with tears.

Voice :

Enough ! Enough ! stop your singing !

Nandini :

(*Sings on*)

A lament heaves and bursts
on the shore of the sea,
The whispers of forgotten days
are born in new leaves to die again.

See, Bishu, he has left the dead frog there and disappeared. He is afraid of songs.

Bishu :

The old frog in his heart yearns to die when it hears singing, that's why he feels afraid. My mad girl, why is there a strange light on your face to-day, like the glow of a distant torch in the sky.

Nandini :

News has reached me, Rañjan is coming to-day.

Bishu :

How ?

Nandini :

Let me tell you. Every day a pair of blue-throats* come and sit on the pomegranate tree in front of my window. Every night, before I sleep, I salute the pole star and say : Sacred star of constancy, if a feather from the wings of the blue-throats finds its way into my room, then I will know my Rañjan is coming. This

*Nîlkantha, a bird of good omen.

morning, as soon as I woke, I found a feather on my bed. See, here it is under my breast-cloth. When I meet him I shall put this feather on his crest.

Bishu :

They say, blue-throats' wings are an omen of victory.

Nandini :

Rañjan's way to victory lies through my heart.

Bishu :

No more of this; let me go to my work.

Nandini :

I shan't let you work to-day.

Bishu :

What must I do then?

Nandini :

Sing that song of waiting.

Bishu :

(*Sings*)

He who ever wants me through the ages,—
is it not he who sits to-day by my wayside?
I seem to remember a glimpse I had of his face,
in the twilight dusk of some ancient year.
Is it not he who sits to-day by the wayside?

Nandini :

Bishu, when you sing I cannot help feeling that I owe you much, but have never given anything to you.

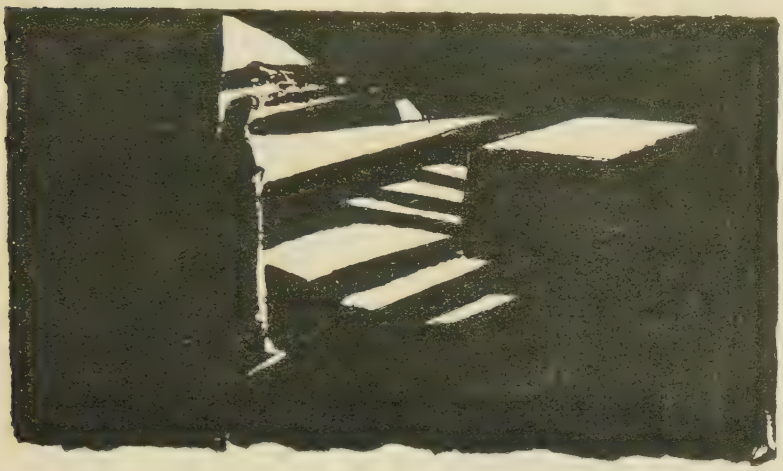
Bishu :

I shall decorate my forehead with the mark of your never-giving, and go my way. No little-giving for me, in return for my song! Where will you go now?

Nandini :

To the wayside by which Rañjan is coming.

[*They go*].



[*The Governor and a Headman come in*]

Governor :

No, we can't possibly allow Rañjan to enter this parish.

Headman :

I put him to work in the tunnels of Vajragarh.

Governor :

Well, what happened ?

Headman :

He said he was not used to being made to work. The Headman of Vajragarh came with the police, but the fellow doesn't know what fear is. Threaten him, he bursts out laughing. Asked why he laughs, he says solemnity is the mask of stupidity and he has come to take it off.

Governor :

Did you set him to work with the diggers ?

Headman :

I did, I thought that pressure would make him yield. But on the contrary it seemed to lift the pressure from the diggers' minds also. He cheered them up, and asked them to have a digger's dance !

Governor :

Digger's dance ! What on earth is that ?

Headman :

Rañjan started singing. Where were they to get drums ?—they objected. Rañjan said, if there weren't any drums, there were spades enough. So they began keeping time with the spades, making a joke of their digging up of nuggets.

The Headman himself came over to reprimand them. "What style of work is this ?" he thundered.

"I have unbound the work" said Rañjan "It won't have to be dragged out by main force any more, it will run along of itself, dancing."

Governor :

The fellow is mad, I see.

Headman :

Hopelessly mad. "Use your spade properly," shouted I. "Much better give me a guitar," said he smiling.

Governor :

But how did he manage to escape from Vajragarh and come up here ?

Headman :

That I do not know. Nothing seems to fasten on to him. His boisterousness is infectious. The diggers are getting frisky.

Governor :

Hallo, isn't that Ranjan himself,—going along the road, thrumming on an old guitar ? Impudent rascal ! He doesn't even care to hide.

Headman:

Well, I never! Goodness alone knows how he broke through the wall!

Governor:

Go and seize him instantly! He must not meet Nandini in this parish, for anything.

[*Enter Assistant Governor*]

Where are you going?

Assistant Governor:

To arrest Rañjan.

Governor:

Where is the Deputy Governor?

Assistant Governor:

He is so much amused by this fellow that he doesn't want to lay hands on him. He says the man's laugh shows us what queer creatures we governors have grown into.

Governor:

I have an idea. Don't arrest Rañjan. Send him on to the King's sanctum.

Assistant Governor:

He refuses to obey our call, even in the King's name.

Governor:

Tell him the King has made a slave-girl of his Nandini.

Assistant Governor:

But if the King——

Governor:

Don't you worry. Come on, I'll go with you myself.

[*They go*]

[*Enter Professor and Antiquarian.*]

Antiquarian:

I say, what is this infernal noise going on inside?

Professor:

The King, probably in a temper with himself, is engaged in breaking some of his own handiwork.

Antiquarian:

It sounds like big pillars crashing down one after another.

Professor:

There was a lake, at the foot of our hill over there, in which the waters of this Sankhini river used to gather. One day, suddenly, the rock to its left gave way, and the stored-up water rushed out laughing like mad. To see the King now-a-days, it strikes me that his treasure lake has grown weary of its rock wall.

Antiquarian:

What did you bring me here for, Professor?

Professor:

Latterly he has begun to get angry with my science. He says it only burgles through one wall to reveal another behind it, and never reaches the inner chamber of the Life spirit. I thought that, perhaps in the study of antiquity, he might explore the secret of Life's play. My knapsack has been rifled empty, now he can go on pocket-picking history.

Do you see who that is passing by?

Antiquarian:

A girl wearing a grass-green robe.

Professor:

She has for her mantle the green joy of the earth. That is our Nandini. In this Yaksha Town there are governors, foremen, headmen, tunnel-diggers, scholars like myself; there are policemen, executioners, and undertakers,—altogether a beautiful assortment! Only *she*

is out of element. Midst the clamour of the market place she is a tuned-up lyre. There are days when the mesh of my studies is torn by the sudden breeze of her passing by, and through that rent my attention flies away *swish*, like a bird.

Antiquarian :

Good heavens, man ! Are even your well-seasoned bones subject to these poetic fits ?

Professor :

Life's attraction, like the tidal wave, tears away mind from its anchorage of books.

Antiquarian :

Tell me, where am I to meet the King ?

Professor :

There's no means of meeting him. You'll have to talk to him from outside this net-work.

Antiquarian :

We're to converse with this net between us ?

Professor :

Not the kind of whispered talk that may take place through a woman's veil, but solidly concentrated conversation. Even the cows in his stall don't dare to give milk, they yield their butter straight off !

Antiquarian :

Admirable ! To extract the essential from the diluted, is what scholars aim at.

Professor :

But not what God in his creation aims at. He respects the fruit stones that are hard, but rejoices in the plup that is sweet.

Antiquarian :

Professor, I see that your grey science is galloping fast towards grass-green. But I wonder how you can stand this King of yours.

Professor:

Shall I tell you the truth? I love him.

Antiquarian:

You don't mean to say so?

Professor:

He is so great that even what is wrong with him will not be able to spoil him.

[*The Governor comes in.*]

Governor:

I say, man of science, so this is the person you volunteered to bring here. Our King flew into a passion at the very mention of his special subject.

Antiquarian:

May I ask why?

Governor:

The King says there is no age of history which may be called old. It is always an eternal extension of the present.

Antiquarian:

Can the front exist without the back?

Governor:

What he said was: "Time proceeds by revealing the new on his front; but the men of learning, suppressing that fact, will have it that Time ever carries the burden of the old on his back."

[*Nandini comes in hurriedly.*]

Nandini:

What is happening? Who are they?

Governor:

Hallo, Nandini, is that you? I shall wear your *kunda* chain late in the evening. When three-quarters of me can hardly be seen for the dark, then perchance a flower garland might become even me.

Nandini:

Look over there—what a piteous sight! Who are those people, going along with the guards, filing out from the back door of the king's apartments?

Governor:

We call them the king's leavings.

Nandini:

What does that mean?

Governor:

Some day you too will know its meaning; let it be for to-day.

Nandini:

But are these men? Have they flesh and marrow, life and soul?

Governor:

May be they haven't.

Nandini:

Had they never any?

Governor:

May be they had.

Nandini:

Where then is it all gone now?

Governor:

Man of science, explain it if you can, I'm off.

[*He goes.*]

Nandini:

Alas, alas! I see amongst these shadows faces that I know. Surely that is our Anup and Upamanyu?

Professor, they belong to our neighbouring village. Two brothers as tall as they were strong. They used to come and race their boats in our river on the fourteenth day of the moon in rainy June. Oh, who has brought them to this miserable plight?

See, there goes Shaklu,—in sword play he used to win the prize garland before all the others. Anu-up! Shaklu-u! look this way, it's I, your Nandini, Nandin of Isháni, your very next village. They won't even raise their heads—heads lowered for ever!

Who is that? Surely, it is Kanku! Ah misery me! Even a boy like him has been chewed dry and thrown away a piece of sugar cane. He was a very shy lad. He would sit by the sloping side of the river landing where I used to go and fetch water, pretending he had come to gather reeds for making arrows. How often have I mischievously teased him. Kanku, look back at me! Alas, he whose blood would dance in his veins at a mere sign from me, now leaves my call unanswered.

Gone, gone, all the lights of our village are gone out! Professor, the steel is all eaten away, only the dark rust remains,—however did this happen?

Professor:

Nandini, your notice happens to be attracted towards the ashes, but turn your eyes towards the flame, and you will behold the brilliance of its writhing tongues.

Nandini:

I don't follow you at all.

Professor:

Well, you have seen the King, haven't you? I hear you were charmed by his appearance.

Nandini:

Of course I was! Isn't he marvellous in his strength?

Professor:

That marvellousness is the credit side of the account, and this ghastliness is the debit.

These small ones are consumed to ash, that the great ones may leap up in flame. This is the principle underlying all rise to greatness.

Nandini:

It's a fiendish principle!

Professor:

It's no use getting annoyed with a principle. Principles are neither good nor bad. That which happens *does* happen. To go against it, is to knock your head against the law of being.

Nandini:

If this is the way of man's being, I refuse to *be,* I want to depart with those shadows,—show me the way.

Professor:

When the time comes for showing us out, the great ones themselves will point the way. Before that, there's no such nuisance as a way at all! You see how our Antiquarian has quietly slipped off, thinking he'll fly and save himself. After going a few steps, he'll soon discover that there's a wire network stretched from post to post, from country to country.

Nandini, I see, your temper is rising. The red oleanders against your flaming cheek are beginning to look like evening storm clouds gathering for a night of terror.

Nandini:

[*Knocking at the net window*]. Listen, listen!

Professor:

Whom are you calling?

Nandini:

That King of yours, shrouded in his mist of netting.

Professor:

The door of the inner room has been closed. He won't hear you.

Nandini:

(*Calling out*) Bishu, mad brother mine!

Professor:

What d'you want with *him*?

Nandini:

Why hasn't he come back yet? I feel afraid.

Professor:

He was with you only a little while ago.

Nandini:

The Governor said he was wanted to identify Rañjan. I tried to go with him, but they wouldn't let me. Whose groaning is that?

Professor:

It must be that wrestler of ours.

Nandini:

What wrestler?

Professor:

The world-famous Gajju, whose brother, Bhajan, had the bravado to challenge the King to a wrestling match, since when not even a thread of his loin cloth is anywhere to be seen. That put Gajju on his mettle, and he came on with great sound and fury. I told him at the outest that, if he wanted to dig in the tunnels underneath this kingdom, he was welcome,—he could at least drag on a dead and alive existence for sometime. But if he wanted to make a show of heroics, that would not be tolerated for a moment.

Nandini:

Does it at all make for their well-being thus to keep watch and ward over these man-traps night and day?

Professor:

Well being! There's no question of "well" in it at all,—only "being." That *being* of theirs

has expanded so terribly that, unless millions of men are pressed into service, who's going to support its weight? So the net is spreading farther and farther. They must exist you see.

Nandini:

Must they? If it is necessary to die in order to live like men, what harm in dying?

Professor:

Again that anger, the wild cry of red oleander? It is sweet, no doubt, yet what is true is true. If it gives you pleasure to say that one must die to live, well, say so by all means; but those who say that others must die that they themselves may live,—it's only they who are actually alive. You may cry out that this shows a lack of humanity, but you forget, in your indignation, that this is what humanity itself happens to be. The tiger does not feed on the tiger, it's only man who fattens on his fellow man.

[*The Wrestler totters in.*]

Nandini:

Oh poor thing, see how he comes, staggering. Wrestler, lie down here. Professor, do see where he's hurt.

Professor:

You won't see any outward sign of a wound.

Wrestler:

All merciful God, grant me strength once more in my life, if only for one little day!

Professor:

Why, my dear fellow?

Wrestler:

Just to wring that Governor's neck!

Professor:

What has the Governor done to you?

Wrestler:

It's he who brought about the whole thing. I never wanted to fight. Now, after egging me on, he goes about saying it's my fault.

Professor:

Why, what interest had he in your fighting?

Wrestler:

They only feel safe when they rob the whole world of strength. Lord of Mercy, grant that I may be able to gouge his eyes out some day, to tear asunder his lying tongue!

Nandini:

How do you feel now, Wrestler?

Wrestler:

Altogether hollowed out! These demons know the magic art of sucking away not only strength but hope.

If only once I could somehow,—O good God, but once,—everything is possible to thy mercy,—if only I could fasten my teeth for once in the Governor's throat!

Nandini:

Professor, help me to raise him.

Professor:

That would be a crime, Nandini, according to the custom of this land.

Nandini:

Wouldn't it be a crime to let the man perish?

Professor:

That which there is none to punish may be a sin, but never a crime. Nandini, come away, come right away out of this. The tree spreads its

root-fingers and does its grabbing underground, but there it does not bring forth its flowers. Flowers bloom on the branches which reach towards the light. My sweet Red Oleander, don't try to probe our secrets in the depths of their dust. Be for us swaying in the air above, that we may gaze upwards to see you.

There comes the Governor. He hates to see me talk to you. So I must go.

Nandini:

Why is he so dead against me?

Professor:

I can guess. You have touched his heart-strings. The longer it takes to tune them up, the more awful the discord meanwhile.

[*The Professor goes, the Governor comes in.*]

Nandini:

Sir Governor!

Governor:

Nandini, when our Gosain saw that *kunda* garland of yours in my room, both his eyes,—but here he comes———

[*The Gosain comes in.*]

Your Holiness, accept my reverence. That garland was given to me by our Nandini here.

Gosain:

Ah indeed! the gift of a pure heart! God's own white *kunda* flowers! Their beauty remains unsullied even in the hands of a man of the world. This is what gives one faith in the power of virtue, and hope for the sinners' redemption.

Nandini :

Please do something for this man, Your Reverence. There's very little life left in him.

Gosain :

The Governor is sure to keep him as much alive as it is necessary for him to be. But, my child, these discussions ill become your lips.

Nandini :

So in this kingdom you follow some calculation in apportioning life ?

Gosain :

Of course,—for mortal life has its limits. Our class of people have their great burden to bear, therefore we have to claim a larger portion of life's sustenance for our share. That's according to Almighty God's own decree.

Nandini :

Reverend Sir, may I know what good God has so heavily charged you to do to these people ?

Gosain :

The life that is unlimited gives no provocation to fight for its distribution. We Preachers have the charge of turning these people towards this unlimited life. So long as they remain content with that, we are their friends.

Nandini :

Then will this man with his very limited life have to remain lying here half dead ?

Gosain :

Why should he remain lying down anyway ? What say you, Governor ?

Governor :

Quite right. Why should we let him lie ? From now he won't need to walk by his own strength alone, we shall carry him along with ours. Here, Gajju !

Wrestler:

Yes, Sir Governor!

Gosain:

Good Lord, his voice has already become ever so much reedier. It strikes me we shall be able to make him join our choir of the Holy Name

Governor:

Gajju!

Wrestler:

At your service, Sir!

Governor:

Report yourself at the Headman's quarters, parish Y-Z.

Nandini:

How can the poor man possibly walk?

Governor:

Look here, Nandini, it is our business to drive men. With the right kind of push a man can be made to go a good distance, even when he is at the point of collapse.

Get along with you, Gajju!

Wrestler:

As you command, Sir!

Nandini:

Let me come over to the Headman's quarters to help you.

Wrestler:

No. Don't add to my troubles, I beg of you.

[*The Wrestler goes*].

Nandini:

Governor, stay, tell me, whither have you taken my Bishu?

Governor:

Who am I that I should take him? The wind carries off the clouds,—if you think that to be a crime, make enquiries as to who is behind the wind.

Nandini:

Dear me, what an awful place! You are not men, and those you drive are not men, either,—you are winds and they are clouds!

Reverend Gosain, I am sure, *you* know where my Bishu is.

Gosain:

I know, for sure, that wherever he is, it's for the best.

Nandini:

For whose best?

Gosain:

That you won't understand—

Oh, I say, leave off, let go of that, it's my rosary.—Hallo Governor, what wild girl is this you have——

Governor:

The girl has somehow managed to ensconce herself in a niche, safe from the laws of this land, and we can't lay hands on her. Our King himself——

Gosain:

Good heavens, now she'll tear off my wrap of the Holy Name too. What unspeakable outrage!

[*The Gosain flies*].

Nandini:

Governor, you *must* tell me where you have taken Bishu.

Governor:

They have summoned him to the court of judgment. That's all that there is to tell you. Let me go.

Nandini:

Because I am a woman, you are not afraid of me? God sends his thunderbolt through his

messenger, the lightning spark—that bolt I have borne here with me; it will shatter the golden spire of your mastery.

Governor:

Then let me tell you the truth before I go. It's you who have dragged Bishu into danger.

Nandini:

I?

Governor:

Yes, you! He was so long content to be quietly burrowing away under-ground like a worm. It's you who taught him to spread the wings of death. O fire of the gods, you'll yet draw forth many more to their fate.—Then at length will you and I come to our understanding, and that won't be long.

Nandini:

So may it be. But tell me one thing before you go. Will you not let Rañjan come and see me?

Governor:

No, never.

Nandini:

Never, you say! I defy you to do your worst. This very day I am sure, absolutely sure, that he and I will meet!

[*Governor goes*].

(*Knocking and tugging at the net-work*). Listen, listen, King! Where's your court of judgment? Open its door to me.

[*Kishôr comes in*].

Who is that? My boy, Kishôr! Do you know where Bishu is?

Kishôr:

Yes, Nandini, be ready to see him. I don't know how it was, the Chief of the Guard took a

fancy to my youthfulness and yielded to my entreaties. He has consented to take him along by this path.

Nandini:

Guard! Take him along? Is he then——

Kishôr:

Yes, here they come.

Nandini:

What! Handcuffs on your wrists? Friend of my heart, where are they taking you like that?

[*Bishu comes in under arrest*].

Bishu:

It's nothing to be anxious about!—Guards, please wait a little, let me say a few words to her.—My wild girl, my heart's joy, at last I am free.

Nandini:

What do you mean, Singer of my heart? I don't understand your words.

Bishu:

When I used to be afraid, and try to avoid danger at every step, I seemed to be at liberty; but that liberty was the worst form of bondage.

Nandini:

What offence have you committed that they should take you away thus?

Bishu:

I spoke out the truth to-day, at last.

Nandini:

What if you did.

Bishu:

No harm at all!

Nandini :

Then why did they bind you like this?

Bishu :

What harm in that either? These chains will bear witness to the truth of my freedom.

Nandini :

Don't they feel ashamed of themselves to lead you along the road chained like a beast? Aren't they men too?

Bishu :

They have a big beast inside then, that's why their heads are not lowered by the indignity of man, rather the inner brute's tail swells and wags with pride at man's downfall.

Nandini :

O dear heart! Have they been hurting you? What are these marks on your body?

Bishu :

They have whipped me, with the whips they use for their dogs. The string of that whip is made with the same thread which goes to the stringing of their Gosain's rosary. When they tell their beads they don't remember that; but probably their God is aware of it.

Nandini :

Let them bind me like that too, and take me away with you, my heart's Joy! Unless I share some of your punishment I shan't be able to touch food from to-day.

Kishôr :

I'm sure I can persuade them to take me in exchange for you. Let me take your place, Bishu.

Bishu :

Don't be silly!

Kishôr:

Punishment won't hurt me. I am young. I shall bear it with joy.

Nandini:

No, no, do not talk like that.

Kishôr:

Nandini, my absence has been noticed, their blood-hounds are after me. Allow me to escape the indignity awaiting me by taking shelter in a punishment I joyfully accept.

Bishu:

No, it won't do for you to be caught—not for a while yet. There's work for you, dear boy, and dangerous work too. Rañjan has come. You must find him out.

Kishôr:

Then I bid you farewell, Nandini. What is your message when I meet Rañjan?

Nandini:

This tassel of red oleanders (*hands it to him*).

[*Kishôr goes*].

Bishu:

May you both be united once again.

Nandini:

That union will give me no pleasure now. I shall never be able to forget that I sent you away empty-handed. And what has that poor boy, Kishôr, got from me?

Bishu:

All the treasure hidden in his heart has been revealed to him by the fire you have lighted in his life. Nandini, I remind you, it's for you to put that blue-throat's feather on Rañjan's crest.—There, do you hear them singing the harvest song?

Nandini:

I do, and it wrings my heart, to tears.

Bishu:

The play of the fields is ended now, and the field-master is taking the ripe corn home. Come on, Guards, let's not linger any more.

(*Sings*)

Mow the corn of the last harvest,
bind it in sheaves.
The remainder, let it return
as dust unto the dust.

[*They go*]

[*The Governor and a Doctor come in.*]

Doctor:

I've seen him. I find the King dissatisfied with himself. That's a disease, not of the body, but of the mind.

Governor:

What's the remedy?

Doctor:

A big shock. Try and get up a big row, either with some other king, or amongst the people themselves!

Governor:

In other words, unless he is allowed to harm some one else, he will harm himself?

Doctor:

These big men are big babies. They must have plenty of play. When they get tired of one game, if you don't supply them with another, they'll break their toys. But be prepared, Governor, there isn't much time to lose.

Governor:

I've read the signs long ago, and completed all arrangements. But what a pity! Just when our golden city has amassed wealth such as it never had before, to have to—never mind, you may go—I'll think it over.

[*Doctor goes.*]

[*A Headman comes in.*]

Headman:

Did Your Lordship send for me? I am the Headman of Parish J.

Governor:

You are No. 321, aren't you?

Headman:

Marvellous! Your Lordship remembers even my unworthy self!

Governor:

My wife will be driving out to-day. The post will be changed near your village, and you must see that she's not detained.

Headman:

There's a plague on the cattle of our parish, and not a single ox can be had to draw the car. Never mind, we can press the diggers into service.

Governor:

You know where you have to take her? To the garden-house, where the feast of the Flag-worship is to be held.

Headman:

I'll see to it at once, but let me tell you one thing before I go. That 69 Ng, whom they call mad Bishu,—it's high time to cure his madness.

Governor:

Why, how does he annoy you?

Headman :

Not so much by what he says or does, as by what he implies.

Governor :

There's no need to worry about him any further. You understand !

Headman :

Really ! That's good news, indeed ! Another thing. That 47 V, he's rather too friendly with 69 Ng.

Governor :

I have observed that.

Headman :

Your Lordship's observation is ever keen. Only, as you have to keep an eye on so many things, one or two may perchance escape your notice. For instance, there's our No. 95, a distant connection of mine by marriage, ever ready to make sandals for the feet of Your Lordship's sweeper out of his own ribs,—so irrepressibly loyal is he that even his wife hangs her head for very shame,—and yet up to now————

Governor :

His name has been entered in the High Register.

Headman :

Ah, then his lifelong service will at last receive its reward ! The news must be broken to him gently, because he gets epileptic fits, and supposing suddenly————

Governor :

All right, we'll see to that. Now be off, there's no time.

Headman :

Just a word about another person,—though he's my own brother-in-law. When his mother died, my wife brought him up with her own hands; yet for my master's sake————

Governor:

You can tell me about him another time. Run away now.

Headman:

There comes His Honor the Deputy Governor. Please speak a word to him on my behalf. He doesn't look upon me with favour. I suspect that when 69 Ng, used to enjoy the favour of free entry into the palace, he must have been saying things against me.

Governor:

I assure you, he never even mentioned your name.

Headman:

That's just his cleverness! What can be more damaging than to suppress the name of a man, whose name is his best asset? These schemers have their different ways. No. 33 of our Parish has an incurable habit of haunting Your Lordship's private chamber. One is always afraid of his inventing goodness knows what calumnies about other people. And yet if one knew the truth about his own————————

Governor:

There's positively no time to-day. Get away with you, quick!

Headman:

I make my salute.

(*Coming back*). Just one word more lest I forget. No. 88 of our neighbouring Parish started work on a miserable pittance, and before two years are out his income has run into thousands, not to speak of extras! Your Lordship's mind is like that of the gods—a few words of hypocritical praise are enough to draw down the best of your boons.

Governor:

All right, all right,—that can keep for to-morrow.

Headman:

I'm not so mean as to suggest taking away the bread from his mouth. But Your Lordship should seriously consider whether it's wise to keep him on at the Treasury. Our Vishnu Dutt knows him inside out. If you send——

Governor:

I shall send for him this very day. But begone,—not another word!

Headman:

Your Lordship, my third son is getting to be quite a big boy. He came the other day to prostrate himself at your feet. After two days of dancing attendance outside, he had to go away without gaining admission to you. He feels it very bitterly. My daughter-in-law has made with her own hands an offering of sweet pumpkin for Your Lordship————

Governor:

Oh confound you! Tell him to come day after to-morrow, he will be admitted. *Now, will you*————

[*Headman goes. The Deputy Governor comes in.*]

Deputy Governor:

I've just sent on the dancing girls and musicians to the garden.

Governor:

And that little matter about Rañjan,—how far—?

Deputy Governor:

That kind of work is not in my line. The Assistant Governor has taken it upon himself to do the job. By this time his————

Governor:

Does the King————?

Deputy Governor:

The King can't possibly have understood. Some lie told by our men has goaded Rañjan to frenzy, and he's rushing to the usual fate of ————I detest the whole business. Move-over, I don't think it right to deceive the King like this.

Governor:

That responsibility is mine. Now then, that girl must be————

Deputy Governor:

Don't talk of all that to me. The Headman who has been put on duty is the right man,—he doesn't stick at any dirtiness whatever.

Governor:

Does that man Gosain know about this affair?

Deputy Governor:

I'm sure he can guess, but he's careful not to know for certain.

Governor:

What's his object?

Deputy Governor:

For fear of there being no way left open for saying: "I don't believe it."

Governor:

But what makes him take all this trouble?

Deputy Governor:

Don't you see? The poor man is really two in one, clumsily joined,—Priest on the skin, Governor at the marrow. He has to take precious care to prevent the Governor part of him coming up to the surface, lest it should clash too much with his telling of beads.

Governor:

He might have dropped the beads altogether.

Deputy Governor:

No, for whatever his blood may be, his mind, in a sense, is really pious. If only he can tell his beads in his temple, and revel in slave-driving in his dreams, he feels happy. But for him, the true complexion of our God would appear too black. In fact, Gosain is placed here only to help our God to feel comfortable.

Governor:

My friend, I see the instinct of the Ruler doesn't seem to match with the colour of your own blood, either!

Deputy Governor:

There's hope still. Human blood is fast drying up. But I can't stomach your No. 321 yet. When I'm obliged to embrace him in public, no holy water seems able to wash out the impurity of his touch.

Here comes Nandini.

Governor:

Come away, I don't trust you. I know the spell of Nandini has fallen on your eyes.

Deputy Governor:

I know that as well as you do. But you don't seem to know that a tinge of her oleanders has got mixed with the colour of duty in *your* eyes too—that's what makes them so frightfully red.

Governor:

That may be. Fortunately for us, our mind knows not its own secret. Come away.

[*They go.*]

[*Nandini comes in.*]

Nandini:

(*Knocking and pushing at the network*) Listen, listen, listen!

[*The Gosain comes in.*]

Gosain:

Whom are you prodding like that?

Nandini:

That boa-constrictor of yours, who remains in hiding and swallows men.

Gosain:

Lord, lord! When Providence wishes to destroy the small, it does so by putting big words into their little mouths.

See here, Nandini, believe me when I tell you that I aim at your welfare.

Nandini:

Try some more real method of doing me good.

Gosain:

Come to my sanctuary, let me chant you the Holy Name for a while.

Nandini:

What have I to do with the name?

Gosain:

You will gain peace of mind.

Nandini:

Shame, shame on me if I do! I shall sit and wait here at the door.

Gosain:

You have more faith in men than in God?

Nandini:

Your God of the Flagstaff,—he will never unbend. But the man who is lost to sight behind the netting, will he also remain bound in his net-

work for ever? Go, go. It's your trade to delude men with words, after filching away their lives.

[*The Gosain goes.*]

[*Enter Phágulal and Chandrá.*]

Phágulal:

Our Bishu came away with you, where is he now? Tell us the truth.

Nandini:

He has been made prisoner and taken away.

Chandrá:

You witch, you must have given information against him. You are their spy.

Nandini:

You don't really believe that!

Chandrá:

What else are you doing here?

Phágulal:

Every person suspects every other person in this cursed place. Yet I have always trusted you, Nandini. In my heart I used to————however, let that pass. But to-day it looks very very strange, I must say.

Nandini:

Perhaps it does. It may really be even as you say. Bishu has got into trouble for coming with me. He used to be quite safe in your company, he said so himself.

Chandrá:

Then why did you decoy him away, you evil-omened creature?

Nandini:

Because he said he wanted to be free.

Chandrá:

A precious kind of freedom you have given him!

Nandini:

I could not understand all that he said, Chandrá. Why did he tell me that freedom could only be found by plunging down to the bottom of danger?—Phágulal, how could I save him who wanted to be free from the tyranny of safety?

Chandrá:

We don't understand all this. If you can't bring him back, you'll have to pay for it. I'm not to be taken in by that coquettish prettiness of yours.

Phágulal:

What's the use of idle bickering? Let's gather a big crowd from the workmen's lines, and then go and smash the prison gate.

Nandini:

I'll come with you.

Phágulal:

What for?

Nandini:

To join in the breaking.

Chandrá:

As if you haven't done quite enough breaking already, you sorceress!

[*Gôkul comes in.*]

Gôkul:

That witch must be burnt alive, before everything else.

Chandrá:

That won't be punishment enough. First knock off that beauty of hers, with which she goes about ruining people. Weed it out of her face as the grass is weeded with a hoe.

Gôkul:

That I can do. Let this hammer just have a dance on her nose tip————

Phágulal:

Beware! If you dare touch her————

Nandini:

Stop, Phágulal. He's a coward; he wants to strike me because he's afraid of me. I don't fear his blows one bit.

Gôkul:

Phágulal, you haven't come to your senses yet. You think the Governor alone is your enemy. Well, I admire a straightforward enemy. But that sweet-mouthed beauty of yours————

Nandini:

Ah, so you too admire the Governor, as the mud beneath his feet admires the soles of his shoes!

Phágulal:

Gôkul, the time has at length come to show your prowess, but not by fighting a girl. Come along with me. I'll show you what to fight.

[*Phágulal Chandrá and Gôkul go.*]

[*A band of men come in.*]

Nandini:

Where are you going, my good men?

First man:

We carry the offering for the Flag-worship.

Nandini:

Have you seen Rañjan?

Second man:

I saw him once, five days ago, but not since. Ask those others who follow us.

Nandini:

Who are they?

Third man:

They are bearing wine for the Governors' feast.

[*The first batch goes, another comes in.*]

Nandini:

Look here, red-caps, have you seen Rañjan?

First man:

I saw him the other day at the house of Headman Sambhu.

Nandini:

Where is he now?

Second man:

D'you see those men taking the ladies' dresses for the feast? Ask them. They hear a lot of things that don't reach our ears.

[*Second batch go, a third come in.*]

Nandini:

Do *you* know, my men, where they have kept Rañjan?

First man:

Hush, hush!

Nandini:

I am sure you know. You *must* tell me.

Second man:

What enters by our ears doesn't come out by our mouths, that's why we are still alive. Ask one of the men who are carrying the weapons.

[*They go, others come in.*]

Nandini:

Oh do stop a moment and listen to me. Tell me, where is Rañjan?

First man:

The auspicious hour draws near. It's time for the King himself to come for the Flag-worship. Ask him about it when he steps out. We only know the beginning, not the end.

[*They go.*]

Nandini:

(*Shaking the network violently*). Open the door. The time has come.

Voice (*behind the scenes*):

But not for you. Go away from here.

Nandini:

You must hear *now* what I have to say. It cannot wait for another time.

Voice:

You want Rañjan I know. I have asked the Governor to fetch him at once. But don't remain standing at the door when I come out for the worship, for then you'll run great risk.

Nandini:

I have cast away all fear. You can't drive me away. Happen what may, I'm not going to move till your door is opened.

Voice:

To-day's for the Flag-worship. Don't distract my mind. Get away from my door.

Nandini:

The gods have all eternity for their worship, they're not pressed for time. But the sorrows of men cannot wait to reach other men, they have so very little time.

Voice:

I am tired, very tired. I go to the Flag-worship to revive my drooping spirit. Don't unnerve me.

Nandini:

Pass over my body if you will, I shan't move.

Voice:

Nandini, too much have I indulged you, so that you no longer fear me. But to-day you *shall* be afraid!

Nandini:

I dare you to frighten me, as you do the rest. I scorn your indulgence!

Voice:

Do you indeed! Then I shall shatter your pride to-day. The time has come for me to reveal myself to you.

Nandini:

I await that revelation. Open your door.

[*The door opens, the King appears*].

Oh who is that,—lying on the floor,—is it not Rañjan himself?

King:

What did you say? Rañjan! How can that possibly be?

Nandini:

Yes, this is indeed my Rañjan.

King:

Then why did he not give his name? Why did he fling me his challenge?

Nandini:

Wake, Rañjan, it is I, your Red Oleander! King, why does he not wake?

King:

Deceived! These traitors have deceived me,—perdition take them! My own machine refuses my sway! Call the Governor—bring him to me handcuffed——

Nandini:

King, they all say you know magic. Make him wake up for my sake.

King:

My magic can only put an end to waking.—Alas! I know not how to awaken.

Nandini:

Then lull me to sleep,—the same sleep! Oh, why did you work this havoc? I cannot bear it any more.

King:

I have killed youth. Yes, I have indeed killed youth,—all these years, with all my strength. The curse of youth, dead, is upon me.

Nandini:

Did he not take my name?

King:

He did,—in such a way that every vein in my body was set on fire.

Nandini:

(*To Rañjan*). My love, my brave one, here do I place this blue-throat's feather in your crest. Your victory has begun from to-day, and I am its bearer. Ah, here is that tassel of my flowers in his hand. Then Kishôr must have met him——

But where is he? King, where is that boy?

King:

Which boy?

Nandini:

The boy who brought these flowers to Rañjan.

King:

That absurd little child! He came to defy me with his girlish face.

Nandini:

And then? Tell me! Quick!

King:

He burst himself against me, like a bubble.

Nandini:

King, the Time is indeed now come!

King:

Time for what?

Nandini:

For the last fight between you and me.

King:

But I can kill you in no time,—this instant.

Nandini:

From that very instant that death of mine will go on killing you every single moment.

King:

Be brave, Nandini, trust me. Make me your comrade to-day.

Nandini:

What would you have me do?

King:

To fight against me, but with your hand in mine. That fight has already begun. There is my flag. First I break the flagstaff,—thus! Next it's for your to tear its banner. Let your hand unite with mine to kill me, utterly kill me. That will be my emancipation.

Guards (*Rushing up*):

What are you doing King? You dare break the Flagstaff, the holiest symbol of our divinity? The Flagstaff which has its one point piercing the heart of the earth and the other that of heaven! What a terrible sin,—on the very day of the Flag-worship! Comrades, let us go and inform our Governors.

[*They run off*]

King:

A great deal of breaking remains to be done. You will come with me, Nandini?

Nandini:

I will.

[*Phágulal comes in*].

Phágulal:

They won't hear of letting Bishu off. I am afraid, they'll——Who is this? The King!

Oh you wicked witch,—conspiring with the King himself! O vile deceiver!

King:

What is the matter with you? What is that crowd out for?

Phágulal:

To break the prison gate. We may lose our lives, but we shan't fall back.

King:

Why should you fall back? I too am out for breaking. Behold the first sign—my broken flagstaff!

Phágulal:

What! This is altogether beyond us, simple folk. Be merciful, Nandini, don't deceive me. Am I to believe my eyes?

Nandini:

Brother, you have set out to win death. You have left no chance for deception to touch you.

Phágulal:

You too come along with us, our own Nandini!

Nandini:

That is what I'm still alive for Phágulal. I wanted to bring my Rañjan amongst you. Look there, he has come, my hero, braving death!

Phágulal:

Oh, horror! Is that Rañjan lying there, silent?

Nandini:

Not silent. He leaves behind him in death his conquering call. He will live again, he cannot die.

Phágulal:

Ah, my Nandini, my beautiful one, was it for this you were waiting all these eager days?

Nandini:

I *did* await his coming, and he *did* come. I still wait to prepare for his coming again, and he *shall* come again. Where is Chandrá?

Phágulal:

She has gone with her tears and prayers to the Governor, accompanied by Gôkul. I'm afraid Gôkul is seeking to take up service with the Governor. He will betray us.

King, are you sure you don't mistake us? We are out to break your own prison, I tell you!

King:

Yes, it is my *own* prison. You and I must work together, for you cannot break it alone.

Phágulal:

As soon as the Governor hears of it, he will march with all his forces to prevent us.

King:

Yes, my fight is against them.

Phágulal:

But the soldiers will not obey you.

King:

You will be on my side!

Phágulal:

Shall we be able to win through?

King:

We shall at least be able to die! At last I have found the meaning of death. I am saved!

Phágulal:

King, do you hear the tumult?

King:

There comes the Governor with his troops. How could he be so quick about it? He must have been prepared beforehand. They have used my own power against me.

Phágulal:

My men have not yet turned up.

King:

They will never come. The Governor is sure to get round them.

Nandini:

I had my last hope that they would bring my Bishu to me. Will that never be?

King:

No hope of that, I'm afraid.

Phágulal:

Then come along, Nandini, let us take you to a safe place first. The Governor will see red, if he but catches sight of you.

Nandini:

You want to banish me into the solitary exile of safety?

(*Calling out*) Governor! Governor!—He has swung up my garland of *kunda* flowers on his spear-head. I will dye that garland the colour of my oleanders with my heart's blood.—Governor! He has seen me! Victory to Rañjan!

[*Runs off.*]

King:

(*Calling after her*) Nandini!

[*Follows her.*]

[*The Professor comes in.*]

Phágulal:

Where are *you* hurrying to, Professor?

Professor :

Someone said that the King has at last had tidings of the secret of Life, and has gone off in quest of it. I have thrown away my books to follow him.

Phágulal :

The King has just gone off to his death. He has heard Nandini's call.

Professor :

The network is torn to shreds! Where is Nandini?

Phágulal :

She has gone before them all. We can't reach her any more.

Professor :

It is only now that we shall reach her. She won't evade us any longer.

[*Professor rushes out, Bishu comes in.*]

Bishu :

Phágulal, where is Nandini?

Phágulal :

How did you get here?

Bishu :

Our workmen have broken into the prison. There they are,—running off to fight. I came to look for Nandini. Where is she?

Phágulal :

She has gone in advance of us all.

Bishu :

Where?

Phágulal :

To the last freedom.

Bishu, do you see who is lying there?

Bishu :

Rañjan!

Phágulal :

You see the red streak?

Bishu :

I understand,—their red marriage tie!

Phágulal :

They are united.

Bishu :

Now it is for me to take my last lonely journey.—Perhaps we may meet.—Perhaps she may want me to sing.—My mad girl, O my mad girl!—

Come, brother, on to the fight!

Phágulal :

To the fight! Victory to Nandini!

Bishu :

Victory to Nandini!

Phágulal :

Here is her wristlet of red oleanders. She has bared her arm to-day,—and left us.

Bishu :

Once I told her I would not take anything from her hand. I break my word and take this. Come along!

[*They go.*]

(*Song in the distance*).

Hark 'tis Autumn calling,—
Come, O come away!
The earth's mantle of dust is filled with ripe corn!
O the joy! the joy!

[CURTAIN.]

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